

*SHE WAITED
PATIENTLY*

MARY DIUGUID DAVIS

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BERTRAND SMITHS
ACRES OF BOOKS
140 PACIFIC AVENUE
LONG BEACH, CALIF.

For Grandama

Presented to Her by Doyle
and Virginia as Her Christmas
Gift 25th of December 1916

She Waited Patiently.

BY

MRS. MARY DIUGUID DAVIS.

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MARY DIUGUID DAVIS.

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She Waited Patiently.

CHAPTER I.

A GREAT SORROW AT SUNNYMEADE.

“I TELL you, honey, dese. linen clo’es jes’ looks lovely—sweet ernough to eat. But den—”

The sudden pause, the deep-drawn sigh, caused the girl to whom these remarks were addressed to raise her eyes from her embroidery.

“But what, Mammy? One would think, from your very doleful manner and deep sighs, you were selecting from that snowy heap of linen and lace my shroud. You may well say they look sweet enough to eat. Eliza has certainly done herself great credit as a laundress. I know you will miss me; that is but natural; for eighteen years I have been your care. You must remember I am not going a long way off; I will be here so often you will scarcely miss me. I do not mind telling you a little secret: Before I gave Dr. Gray his final answer I exacted the promise that I should often visit this dear old Sunnymeade. I knew how much you, father and Aunt Lizzie would miss me. Then, between my visits, you will all come to see me.”

Eloise Carter was the idol of the household at Sunnymeade. She had been wooed and won by one of the

most talented young physicians of a near-by city. In a short time she would leave this home, where she had been as free from care as the birds, for a new one in the city. She did not remember her mother, who died when she was only two years old.

Her father's sister had as faithfully as possible supplied the mother's place. To do this, she had bravely declined the offer of the hand and heart of one who would have placed her as mistress of one of the loveliest homes in the county.

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When Mrs. Carter was told by her physician that her end was near, and if she wished to say anything special in regard to her child she had better do it at once, she turned her face to the wall, and to those who were watching her it seemed that the shock was so great she would probably not rally. But she had gone to that One who had never failed her in her hours of need. Turning to him, as he stood with his hand on her pulse, awaiting the result, she said :

"Ah, Doctor, a most important question you failed to ask, and that was, 'Is it well with your soul?' I know in whom I have believed, and not only that he is able, but will keep me and those whom I now commit to his care."

She missed her husband and sister-in-law. They could not trust themselves to hear the doctor break the startling news to her. Standing near was her faithful nurse, who had been with her all her life, and now had charge of her own little Eloise.

"Mammy, tell your master and Miss Lizzie to come in. I must speak to them."

The poor husband was almost broken-hearted. The greatest pleasure he had ever known was to make her happy. He knew that his wife was very sick, but apprehended no such termination as this; in fact, the idea of her death had never presented itself to him. She was happy, and naturally of the most buoyant disposition. Everything for them had a golden hue. Theirs was a typical Virginia home before the terrible times of carnage laid in waste so many like it. We can, then, appreciate his feelings when, just one hour before, Dr. Thornton asked him to walk with him into the grove near by, and, as gently as he could, had broken to him the sad intelligence that his wife was past all human aid. He was so dazed for the moment that he seemed as one awakening from some horrible nightmare.

"Oh, my God! Doctor, do not say that! All I have in this world shall be yours, if you will only save her."

"John, you know not what you say. I would need no other reward but the pleasure of having her well again."

He had to wait for him to somewhat recover from his outburst before proceeding.

"Oh, that I had the power to keep her here! I had hoped that she would pass the crisis safely, and for that reason would not say anything to you about my fears. In my anxiety, I've not closed my eyes for nearly

twenty-four hours. I watched every stage of the disease, and it was not till within the last hour that certain symptoms have developed which put the case beyond medical skill. As but a few hours at most are left to her, I feel it my duty to tell her. She may wish to say something in regard to her wishes concerning Eloise. I know she has laid many plans for her future."

The two men returned to the house.

Mr. Carter, feeling that he could not trust himself in his wife's presence, went into the parlor. Falling on his knees, he earnestly pleaded with God to spare his wife.

"Oh, dear father, spare her, spare her!" was his cry. He knew he voiced his own desires; but was it the Christian's petition he was making? "O God, help me to do what is right in thy sight. Help me, O Father, to say, 'If it be thy will.'"

Aunt Hannah's knock at the door aroused him.

"Mars John, Miss Kate wants you."

That was enough. He went at once, and as she appeared to be so much brighter and stronger, hope welled up in his bosom. The thought came to him that perhaps the doctor, in his own anxiety, had been mistaken.

As he went in she reached out her hand. He clasped it in his own and fell on his knees beside her.

"Poor John! I am so sorry for you. We have been so happy together, I thought we would have many years to share our joys and sorrows. So far there have been no sorrows. You were so kind, loving and thoughtful, John, that there was no time for anything but happiness.

I have so often pictured a bright and sunny old age for us. But the Father has willed otherwise, and we, as his children, must submit. I want to tell you my wishes in regard to Eloise. Do not let her come in now. I could not finish what I would say if she were here."

Could she have seen into the nursery and looked upon the beautiful little sleeper in her crib, with the sunny curls around her white forehead, and ever and anon a smile playing around her dimpled mouth, she would have been glad that for the present she knew nothing of trouble.

"Come, Lizzie, Mammy. To you three I commend my greatest earthly treasure—my own child, with an immortal soul—to be reared for God. Do not spoil her. Teach her obedience and reverence. Lizzie, Mammy, when she is old enough to understand, tell her to comfort her father—to make his declining years happy and pleasant by her love and obedience. Tell her early of Jesus' love, and how he was the only solace and comfort of her mother at this hour. Will you each promise me this?"

"I will do all you ask," said her sister.

A tighter clasp of the hand and a heart-broken sob was the only answer her husband could give. It sufficed.

Then turning to the other one, who, though her skin was dark, had the perfect confidence of her mistress as to her Christian character and integrity. She well knew her child would be safe in her keeping. With the excitement of her race she fell on her

knees, and, with her hands uplifted to Heaven, she exclaimed :

“Yes, yes, Miss Kate, jes’ as sure as I knows I’ll meet you at de great white throne and have ter give account ter God, jes’ dat sure I’ll do my duty by dat baby.”

“I am content. It is all well with me. ‘Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.’ It is all light. The music ! Did you ever hear any like it ?”

It seemed to those around her bed that her mind was clouded, but the bright eye and radiant countenance showed that this was not so.

“John, sing once more our favorite hymn.”

He tried to do it, but not one note could he utter. The silence was profound. Then clearly, as if there was nothing to obstruct the voice, the dying woman herself sang that grand old song :

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word !
What more can he say than to you he hath said ;
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled ?”

Aunt Hannah was the first to join in the song. Keeping time with the swaying motions of her body that only negroes can do effectively, she seemed oblivious to all else.

It was a scene never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

Mrs. Carter's face fairly beamed with the light of the other world. So near was she to the great white throne that its ineffable glory seemed to be all around her.

More impressive, if possible, was the last verse, which has been the solace of many another death-bed.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to its foes.
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake !”

She seemed exhausted, and no one would have been surprised if the end came quickly. Instead, a little rest seemed to refresh her.

“Mammy, call Uncle Tom and the rest of them. I want to say a word to them before I go.”

Her husband went out into the hall and, beckoning to the doctor, said :

“Will it not be too much for her to see them all? Would it not be better to allow Tom only to come, and he could take a message to them from her?”

“No ; I think it will not do any harm. To me it seems she lingers on this side to accomplish some wise purpose which neither you nor I can comprehend. I thought when I spoke to you that all would have been over ere this. I'll speak to them before they go in, and warn them to be very quiet and restrain their feelings.”

The news had spread very rapidly over the farm that the mistress was dying.

Mr. Jones, the manager, seeing that they could not

do their work, had allowed them to lay aside their implements and go to the house. They were collected in groups, and in hushed tones were talking and waiting to hear the latest news. Each one had a kind word to say of her. Many heart-felt prayers went up for her recovery.

Mammy called Uncle Tom, who was her husband, and told him that Miss Kate wished to say "good-bye" to him and the others. He called them all up, and Dr. Thornton came out and spoke to them. They passed in one by one. As Uncle Tom, with weeping eyes, approached, she looked up at him with a smile and said :

"It is all bright, Uncle Tom. There is no shadow in the valley. Jesus is the light. I'll meet you when you cross over. I want you to tell the sweet old story to the young ones who are growing up."

"I will. Bless de Lord. Bless de Lord for his conserlation."

The others passed by and took the hand and went out.

"Ask Mr. Jones to come."

He had been taken into the family and treated as one of the inmates ever since he came to live with them. He was not a Christian, and often in her quiet, gentle way had she urged him to accept Christ. He always listened to her respectfully, but had given her no reason to hope he had done more than that.

Taking his hand, and feeling that her voice was growing more feeble, she drew him down to her.

"I want you to promise me not to put off your preparation for this hour till it is too late. Come to Jesus at once and devote your life to his service. He is not a hard master. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. You will never regret it."

"I promise to try to do what you ask."

He had always admired her beautiful life and honored her Christian character. He knew now there must be a reality in the religion which she not only professed, but daily exemplified. He went out from that room with a firm resolve to keep his promise.

The impress made by the character and words of this humble, unostentatious child of God will tell through many coming generations, as we shall see.

She had asked to see their pastor, Dr. Gordon, whose home was only three miles distant. A man, on one of the fleetest horses, had already been sent for him. Waking from a fitful sleep, her eyes wandered from one to another as if in search of some one. Faintly she asked :

"Has he come?"

The sound of the hurrying hoofs of the horse answered the question. The news of her extreme illness had been a severe blow to this faithful man of God. As he rode along, in answer to this urgent summons, memory was busy and carried him back over the years he had been the shepherd of this flock. This had been his first and only pastorate, and she had been among the first seals to his ministry. He was young and in-

experienced when he came to take charge, and felt burdened by the work before him. His success had far exceeded his expectations, and his fondest hopes had been as nearly realized as they ever are in this world. Very soon after he took charge of the church the Lord sent a gracious revival. Many were added to its membership. The old members were greatly strengthened. Among the new ones were some of the most aggressive, stalwart Christians he had ever known. Often was his heart raised to God in prayer to spare this one, if consistent with his will.

How well he remembered that bright June morning. Could he ever forget it? It was the first time he had been allowed to trouble the baptismal waters. How humble, yet how thankful, he felt, as he stopped on the banks of the stream, to once more ask God's blessing on what he was about to do. Standing by were twenty candidates. The first one to go down was Mr. Johnson. He had always had the confidence of the entire community, but up to this time had never shown any interest in religion. In fact, he had put his own morality and strict integrity far before the christianity of most of the professors he knew. But now he had been brought to see himself as a sinner, and had taken hold of the only hope for salvation. It was a genuine conversion. No one doubted it. As he started down into the stream, much to the surprise of all he began that grand old psalm :

“In all my Lord’s appointed ways,
My journey I’ll pursue ;
‘Hinder me not,’ ye much loved saints,
For I must go with you.

“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I’ll follow where he goes,
‘Hinder me not’ shall be my cry,
Though earth and heaven oppose.

Through duties and through trials, too,
I’ll go at his command ;
‘Hinder me not,’ for I am bound
To my Immanuel’s land.

“And when my Saviour calls me home,
Still this my cry shall be,
‘Hinder me not,’ come welcome death ;
I’ll gladly go with thee.”

The entire crowd joined in, and surely no sweeter music was ever wafted to heaven than went up from the banks of that stream.

One after another came down into and went up out of the water just as their Elder Brother had done in the far away Jordan.

Then he thought of that lovely, fair-haired girl who modestly came last, as he repeated, “I baptize thee, Catherine Eloise Lee, into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost,” and saw her rise from that liquid grave to walk in newness of life with a steadfastness worthy of emulation. From that hour to the present she had been her pastor’s faithful help in all things pertaining to the good of Christ’s cause. He had never known her to swerve from the right, nor to shrink from any duty.

The mind travels rapidly. Another scene presents itself. It is just four years later, and her wedding day. It is another bright June day, with the same blue sky overhead. Nature seemed just as gay as it did on the day of her baptism. When he united in that holiest of all bonds John Edward Carter and Catherine Eloise Lee, and saw them walk down the aisle, he thought it had never before been his privilege to perform that solemn ceremony for two more perfectly suited to each other. In social standing, in educational advantages and intellectual endowments they were certainly well matched. He predicted a long, useful and happy life.

It is so hard for us always to remember that "Man proposes, but God disposes."

As he neared the house and saw the groups of sorrowing negroes, the doctor, with his head bowed, pacing to and fro the long portico, the hope he had nurtured died within him. He was taken at once to the chamber. Her face, though wan and pale, lighted up with pleasure as he approached and grasped her hand. Her voice was growing feeble, and it was with difficulty that she could articulate.

"Ah, brother! I am glad to greet you once more on this side. I was afraid I would not see you again. Preach! Preach the word faithfully. Work while yet it is day. Souls are perishing. I want you to pray that grace may be given me. I have yet the hardest thing to do. O Lord, forgive my doubt."

In the most beseeching terms he begged God to con-

tinue his unbounded grace to this child of his, whose feet were now on the brink of death's cold stream. As he rose from his knees she said, as calmly as though she were only about to fall asleep :

“ Mammy, bring Eloise.”

She brought her at once. Ah, how little she knew what it all meant ! Her little mind comprehended that something unusual was going on. She sprang from her mammy's arms and ran to the bed.

“ P'itty muzzer ! sweet muzzer ! Woise tiss you and make you well. You tiss Woise and make Woise well.”

Printing a kiss on the icy-cold cheeks, and patting them with her soft little hands, she said :

“ Muzzer dit well now.”

“ Poor child ! I would that you could understand ; but it is best thus. To each one of you I leave this charge. Train her for heaven. Tell her that her mother's last prayer was that she would early seek her Saviour and live for him. Good-bye, all. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

One gasp, and all was over. She had passed through the pearly gates and entered into that home prepared for her, and to which she had longingly looked forward. To human eyes, blurred with weeping, it seemed that the life of this young Christian ended, while, in fact, it was just beginning.

The whole neighborhood mourned, for she was a universal favorite.

The hour announced for her funeral was eleven o'clock, two days after her death.

Long before the hour people began to arrive from every direction. In carriages, buggies, on horseback and afoot, they came to pay the last tribute to one who had been a friend to all, but especially to the poor.

See that woman as she wends her way to the casket to take a last look at one who had often befriended her. She seems to be oblivious to the fact that there are others present. As the briny tears course each other down her cheeks she moans :

• “What will I do without her? Who will come now when I'm in trouble? If it hadn't been for her, my Tom would have died. She brought things to make him comfortable and things he could eat. She staid of nights when I couldn't hold my eyes open, I had worked so hard all day.”

And so one after another told of some deed of kindness and charity which she had never mentioned.

Early that morning Uncle Tom came to the house. Going to his master's door, he said :

“Marse John, I's come ter ax a favor for your servants. We has talked it over, and six of de men wants you ter let 'em carry Miss Kate ter de grave. Dey thinks they'd do it more gentler than anybody else could. Den we would like ter form a percession-like and march in front, and, if you'd let us, we wants ter sing 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,' as we go erlong, 'ca'se Miss Kate was mighty fond of hearin' us sing uv

nights, an' dat was her favorite. You know she'd come to de quarters jes' ter lis'en at us, an' she always axed us ter sing dat."

"Yes, Tom, I consent. While six of the neighbors were to do it, I appreciate your feelings in the matter, and I am sure they will, too. I want to say through you to all the rest that I cannot express my feelings towards you in this. I know that your love for your mistress prompted you to make this request. Could she speak to me now, I know she would say, 'Yes, John, let them do it.'"

When Dr. Gordon had finished the solemn and impressive service, the six young colored men, dressed in their best, came in, and, gently lifting the coffin to their shoulders, walked slowly and sadly out. Uncle Tom led the procession of negroes, who walked two and two. The men were hatless, and the women each had a white handkerchief tied turban-like on her head. The singing was just such as only plantation negroes can do.

Arriving at the grave, the coffin was lowered by the bearers, and the vast concourse listened in respectful silence till the song was finished.

As Uncle Tom had said, no "more gentler" hands could have performed the task.

The burial service being concluded, the colored men filled the grave, and the sad cortége went slowly back.

Sunnymeade was a sad misnomer for this home now, for to those bereft it seemed that all of its sunshine had been buried in that little mound on the hill.

CHAPTER II.

CHANGES MADE BY THE WAR.

ONLY those who have passed through just such trials as this can ever know what it meant to the forlorn household who returned to that home to take up again the burdens and sorrows of life.

Dr. Gordon went in and tried as best he could to offer words of comfort. But they seemed to be lost on the husband, who abandoned himself to his grief and refused to be comforted.

When bidding Miss Lizzie good-bye, he suggested that perhaps the prattle of the child might act as a balm to his feelings and attract his thoughts from his own sorrows for a time, at least.

Accordingly, she carried Eloise to the door, and said :

“Run to father ; he wants you.”

He had never been too busy or too much absorbed to catch her up when she came to him, and do something to amuse her.

When she saw her father with his face buried in his hands, and heard his convulsive sobs, she was at a loss to know what to do.

“Farder, Woise tiss you. What you twy for? I tell muzzer, her tum whip bad mans make you twy.”

Running to the door, she called :

“Muzzer, tum whip bad mans make farder twy.”

Rushing to the door, he called :

“Hannah, come and take Eloise ; take her out of my sight. I cannot bear it.”

She caught the little prattler up in her arms and carried her to her own room. She was dumbfounded. She had never seen her master give way to his grief before, and she knew not what to do or say.

He had sincerely mourned the death of his parents, who had died within a few days of each other. But he seemed to become perfectly reconciled to his loss. The fact was, for his father he could not mourn. For from the hour of the burial of his wife he lost all interest in the affairs of this world. He at once set his house in order, and apparently only waited to be called hence, and listened to hear the Master say, “Child, come up higher.”

One morning, when Mr. Carter went into his father’s room, as had been his custom since his mother went away, to see how he had passed the night, he found he had not yet arisen. He was surprised, and turned to go out without disturbing him.

However, noticing the profound stillness, he approached the bed, to find that he had silently “gathered the drapery of his couch around him” and passed over the river to meet the wife who, no doubt, awaited his coming.

He called his sister and wife, and as they looked on the quiet, placid face of the sleeper they could shed no

tears. Knowing that it was well with him, they would not recall him if they could.

In his inordinate grief, he thought of those two "who were lovely in their lives, and in their death were not divided," and wished that he, too, might share what now appeared to him so great a joy.

The only consolation he could get he failed to seek, and forgot to turn to the One who alone could bring surcease of sorrow.

At bed-time his sister came quietly into the room, followed by the nurse, who had always waited for family worship. Handing him the Bible, she said :

"It is time for prayers. We should retire early to-night."

He took it up listlessly and opened it—shall we say, accidentally? No ; for, guided by the great comforter promised to his children, he turned to John xiv. He read it at first almost inaudibly, but as the promised comfort came to him he realized for the first time the selfishness of his sorrow.

Closing the book, he poured out his heart to his Father. He begged forgiveness for his lack of faith—for his want of that abiding trust in God which was his privilege.

His two listeners were hardly able to believe that such a change could come over one as the closing sentences of that prayer indicated.

"Oh, Father, take me, and all that thou hast given me, into thy own keeping. Use us for thy own glory.

May we live in daily expectation of meeting those who have only gone before. May we never be idle in thy service, remembering the time cometh when no man can work."

He arose from his knees with this avowed purpose, knowing that his wife would have advised this course instead of the one he seemed likely to take.

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There was great unrest in the country. The political parties were greatly agitated. The troubles which had been brewing for years seemed likely at this time to terminate in war. No one was settled, for none could tell what the end would be.

Well it was that no eye could penetrate the vista of that time which tried men's souls, from 1861 to 1865.

The little household at Sunnymeade were to know of many things which had never been thought of.

Of course, after the fiery little South Carolina had taken the lead, and her sisters, one after another, had followed her example, Virginians knew that the time was near at hand when the loved old Commonwealth would have to make a decision for or against the little Southern band.

The action of her convention was awaited with breathless anxiety. The people were divided in sentiment. From the Atlantic to her extreme western boundary were many true sons, who felt that she would never desert the Union, of which she was the grand old mother; while there were others, equally true, who

thought her duty was plain to link her fortunes with those of her Southern sisters.

Those days of heartaches, bloodshed and desolate homes we will not recall, except so far as they affect the inmates of Sunnymeade.

When the guns of Sumter announced the determination of the South to defend her rights, a change came over many Virginians, and two days later, by a majority of the votes of her convention, she formally seceded from the Union.

The wires flashed the news over her broad territory, and at once preparation was made for protecting her borders. Many military companies were formed, and all was bustle and confusion.

Mr. Carter did not expect at once to go, as he felt that his sister and child needed him, and he must arrange for their care and protection. His manager, Mr. Jones, had announced his determination to go at once.

A company was formed in the neighborhood, and all eyes turned to Mr. Carter as its captain. He was a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, but had never had a fondness for military life. So urgent was the call that he decided it was his duty to accept.

Great consternation prevailed when it was known that he was to go off with the soldiers.

He was a very busy man the short time he was to be at home. The crops were not all planted, and, as Mr. Jones was to go, too, he had to look as far into the

future as possible. He, like many others, thought it would be only a few months, at most, when all difficulties would be settled.

Calling his servants together, he made known his wishes to them. After telling them that he and Mr. Jones would both be away for some time, he said :

"I leave Tom as head man. He has experience, and will better know how to conduct affairs than the rest. I shall expect you to do as he says. He will make his daily report to Miss Lizzie, and she will write it to me, so I shall know just how you are doing all the time. The prospect for a large crop has never been better, and, with seasonable weather and faithful work, I shall expect a large yield. Just what Tom tells you to do I expect to be done. I'll see how well you have obeyed when I return."

In a few days the cavalry company commanded by Captain John E. Carter left for Richmond, to be formally mustered into service, and to go into camp and await orders to go to the front.

Many of that noble band fill honored graves on the soil of their native State to-day.

The final act of this great drama, which took place at Appomattox Courthouse, found Colonel Carter commanding a regiment instead of the company at whose head he marched away.

He, like many another one, turned his face to what was left of home. In this instance the devastation had not been so great, as it was not in the line of march of either army.

What a change ! His little girl had grown considerably. There had been many changes all around. Some of the servants had died. There had been several births among them.

But now they are all free. What will they do ? How many will remain ? These were puzzling questions.

When the tired and wayworn colonel had reached home there was great rejoicing. He looked but little like the handsome young man who marched away five years before. The hardships had told on him ; gray hairs were showing themselves in his raven locks. The splendid charger he rode away was left on the battlefield of Manassas, having been shot from under him.

He said nothing about the change in affairs, but waited to see what was to be done. He rode over the farm, and was pleased to see how far advanced the spring work was, considering the implements and teams. Of course but little had been done towards keeping them up. He expressed himself to Tom as greatly pleased at his management. He asked him what he thought about the servants leaving.

"Now, Marse John, I can't tell you. I knows what Tom an' Hannah gwine ter do. We're gwine ter stay right here. We're too old ter begin erfresh. Some of dese young uns may go—I can't say—but it's likely. But me an' Hannah, we's gwine ter stay. First place, 'twud jes' kill her ter leave dat baby. She say dat promise she make Miss Kate jes' as bindin' es if Gen'l

Lee had er whipped Gen'l Grant ; 'ca'se Miss Kate she spected her ter live an' die right here. She never make no 'lowance fer dis war when she tell Hannah ter take keer uv dat baby."

"That is all right, Tom. The cabin is yours and Hannah's till God calls you home. If I outlive you I'll see that you are laid side by side there on the hill. I am proud of your work, and will tell all the others so when I talk with them."

With very few exceptions, all decided to remain, and the matter of wages was to be determined when the crops were made.

This digression was made that the reader might understand Aunt Hannah's solicitude. Through these eighteen years she had been faithful to the trust given her. Her advancing age admonished her that the time was approaching when she would have to give her account and meet Miss Kate before the "great white throne," and tell her she had been faithful to the baby. She firmly believed that Miss Kate knew ; but she constantly looked forward to the face-to-face interview, when she would say, "Miss Kate, I kep' de promise, and me and Miss Lizzie never slacked a doin' our duty to dat chile, even endurin' de war, when Marse John was away er fightin'."

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"Now, Mammy, you ought not to look so solemn, for I am just the happiest girl you know. I have the sweetest home here, and will be the proud mistress of

another one by and by. After a while Dr. Gray says he is going to let me have one all my own. Then there will be a nice little nook there for you when you come. Will not that be lovely?"

Glancing up, she saw tears coursing down the withered cheeks.

"Mammy, tell me what troubles you. It must be more than the fact that I am going away. As I'll be called, no doubt, as the wife of a physician, to hear many tales of woe, I'll take my first lesson from you."

"Now, honey, I'se done seen lots of trouble 'bout dis. Taint jes givin' you up, case I spected dat. Wonder is you staid here dis long. You knows de Bible is all true. We jes' got to take it all from one lid ter de uder. It's true I can't read it fer myself, but I'se put erway in my head all I is heard. Your ma read it ter me many en hour when she was er chile. Jes' wait er minit; I want you ter find de place where it say it is er sin to marry an unbelievin' man."

"Oh, Mammy, you know there is nothing like that in the Bible! I never read it."

"Can't help it, chile—'tis dere. It says you ain't to yoke wid unbelievers. Now, what does dat mean, ef it don't mean marryin' folks widout religion. Now you jes' see fer yourself."

Going to the bureau drawer, she brought to Eloise her mother's well-worn Bible, which she kept carefully put away as a memento of the one of whom she remem-

bered so little. To humor the old woman, she turned to her concordance.

"Ah! here. 2 Cor. vi. 14. Now we'll see what it says." Reading slowly to the attentive listener, "'Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?'"

A nod of approval was the only sign made.

"Go on, chile; what else it say?"

"'And what concord hath Christ with Belial?'"

"Umph! dat de devil. Dey jes' call him dat high-soundin' name. He ain't nothin' 'tall but de devil. Go on."

"'Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?'"

"Dar 'tis again. Jes' like I said. You is er believer; you is followed de Lord in baptism. Now ain't it plain 'bout de other one? Ain't dar no more?"

Eloise wished that she could close the Bible and end the conversation; for it had awakened a train of thought entirely new to her.

"'And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

"'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

“ ‘And will be a father unto you ; and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.’ ”

“ Now, chile, don’t you see Mammy knows jes’ what she’s talkin’ about ? ”

“ But, Mammy, you’ve taken too much for granted. While it is all true that I am a believer—that, as I see it, I have followed my Lord in baptism ; but we must allow others to have their own opinions as we do ours. Dr. Gray’s family belong to a different denomination, but that need make no difference with us. How many dear Christian friends have we who belong to other churches, yet we never make that a point of dispute. They have chosen for themselves and allow us to do the same.”

“ But all de same he ain’t no believer. He is de Lord’s enemy. He breaks de commandments. I ain’t heerd him wid my own ears ; but Henry he say it mos’ make his hair stan’ on end to hear how he talks sometimes, when he comes out to de stable to see ’bout his hoss. He say he ’lowed to Bob one day he don’t know how Miss Eloise gwine ter stan’ dat, case she ain’t uster sich talk. If de Doctor begins it whar she is ’twill skeer her ter death. Now, baby, you jes’ read dat commandment ’bout swearin’.”

“ Mammy, I do not think the servants ought to speak in that way of visitors who come to the house—certainly not of Dr. Gray, for every one knows that we are soon to be married.”

“ Dat jes’ what ’tis. Ef he was goin’ ter marry some-

body else 'twould be all right ; but de servants on dis place jes' loves de groun' you walks on. Dey wants you ter have de best. You knows your pa would be mighty offended ef he knew anybody was cussin' on dis place, from de overseer down ter de littlest one. You ain't found dem commandments yit. I learned 'em every one on my fingers when your ma was learnin' 'em to say to her Sunday-school teacher. She beat 'em all, and was jes' as proud of de little red book dey give for it es she could be. I ain't forgot a one of 'em, but I wants you to read dat one out loud."

Again were the well-worn pages turned, and she read with a fervency and pathos she had never before used in reading the "ten commandments."

"'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.'"

"Don't you see, chile, while dis is close to de fust lid, and de yokin' wid unbelievers is close to de las' lid, it's all true and has to be obeyed jes' es sure."

"You wait, Mammy, till Dr. Gray comes again and I think I'll have no trouble in proving to you that he is not to be classed with the unbelievers. He writes that he will be here at the earliest possible moment. He has a very ill patient, in whom he is very much interested. He is to perform a most difficult operation, and will await the result with much anxiety. As soon as the crisis is past he'll get some one to look after her, and will come here for a day or two. I regret as much

as you that he does not belong to the same church that I do. I think it would be much better. I hope to live so consistently that he may be in love with my doctrine and church. There are many kind and noble deeds performed by physicians that are never known to the outside world. I know that he does many deeds of charity. In fact, this very young woman who is keeping him at the post of duty now is a poor, friendless creature, to whom he not only gives his services, but furnishes all of her medicines. I think he is certainly getting God's commendation for that. You know he says if we only give the cup of cold water to one of his children it is as if we gave it to him. In this instance alone I am sure he is doing the part of the Good Samaritan, whom Christ held up as an example to us. You know, Mammy, that there are always two sides to every question, and in courts of law the judge never renders a decision till he has heard from the lawyers on both sides. As Dr. Gray is not here to defend his side, you must let me be the lawyer to defend him."

"Dat's so ; but who's ter be de judge?"

"Oh, I think we can each be a judge, and with this very story we can settle the matter without calling in a third party."

She opened the book again and read the full account of the man who fell among thieves.

"I can assure you that Dr. Gray never goes by on the other side when there is distress to be relieved, but he does just what Christ commended the Samaritan for.

I'll leave it to you if that doesn't look like the work of a Christian?"

"Yes, but appearances mighty deceitful. Dey's outside. 'Tis de inside God sees—way down to de bottom. Ef you're a Christian, you boun' ter show it. Dat's jes' like de Yankees ketching your Uncle Joe endurin' de war. Now, ef he had seen dat dem men was dressed in blue clo'es, would he er stopt en waited till dey come up ter him? No, honey, he'd jes' took out through dem woods, kase he knowed every hog path in 'em. But when he see dem old gray clo'es, what did he do but jes' stopt en wait till dey rode up. He kep' wonderin' how did dey git sich fine hosses en good close. But dey say dey Georgy soldiers, an' was jes' in front ter find some-thin' ter eat. What must he say but, 'You jes come erlong wid me; I 'got plenty yit, an' I's always proud ter divide wid de soldiers.' Now ef he had jes' stopt; but he didn't. He say, 'My boys—an' dar ain't no better fitin' soldiers in de army den dey is—might git down in Georgy some time, en I'd be mighty glad ter know dat some of de folks would take 'em in, en let 'em have a good night's sleep en er sure 'nuff supper.' Den he get mighty full en he turned his head tother way. When he looked he thought dem soldiers looked mighty tickled, en he thought dat a mighty funny way fer Georgy soldiers to do. Jes' den dey come to de cross roads, en he turned ter go home. He said to 'em: 'We'll take dis road.' Dey jes' seemed more ermused dan ever. Marse Joe he couldn't see what so funny in

axin' 'em home, till one ur 'em said: 'Excuse us, old man, but sence dem boys of yourn is sech fine soldiers, and you got so much for de Johnnies, we won't accept. We's a little far from base now. We belongs to de New York soldiers, and will have ter hurry back to report de road to de Colonel. But we'll invite you ter spend de night, in fact some time, wid us.' Marse Joe, in his perlitest manner, thanked 'em, and sed he erbliged to git on home, 'kase his wife would be expectin' him. Dey jes' compelled him ter go; jes' allowed him ter leave a note wid ole widder Smith ter send ter Miss Carline, fust passin'. Den next day what should dey do but jes' send him off and lock him up in Fort Monroe—all on ercount de 'ceitful 'pearance of dem Yankees. 'Tis jes' so wid a Christian; dey got ter be one thing or tother. You can't hole wid de hare and run wid de houn' in religion. I sees lots uv trouble 'bout it. You knows who'll show you 'bout it."

This to Eloise had been like a startling apparition. She wondered that it had never presented itself to her in that light before. Scarcely two months would elapse before she took the most important step of her life. Was it possible for her to take it unadvisedly?

She had seen only the gilded side of the picture. If the thought of a cloud had presented itself, the silver-lining had so far overshadowed it that she saw it not. The old woman's words had carried much of truth with them. She felt inexpressibly sad. She repeated over and over again to herself, "Why, oh, why, did I not think of it before?"

CHAPTER III.

AUNT HANNAH AWAKENS A NEW CHORD.

ALL night Eloise tossed on her bed. The little sleep she got was fitful and unrefreshing.

When she appeared at the breakfast table the next morning, both her father and aunt noticed that there was something amiss.

"Are you sick?" they asked, almost in the same breath.

"No, but I was restless and did not sleep very well. I'll be all right as soon as I have had a cup of coffee."

So carefully had they both watched her all of her life, that there could be no concealment from them.

She seemed to brighten up and exerted herself to appear as cheerful as usual. She succeeded so well that both left the table satisfied that nothing was wrong.

As soon as the meal was finished, she went out and was busy with her flowers, hoping in that way to rid herself of the haunting thoughts which would not down at her bidding. She gathered some of the handsomest ones and carried them to the parlor, where she arranged them with that exquisite taste she knew so well how to display. Then she busied herself with other little jobs, trying to divert her thoughts till the return of the boy who had gone for the mail.

She was the first to get possession of the bag on his arrival. How eagerly she opened it and threw out the letters and papers till the expected missive came in view. She gathered up what belonged to her and went to her room. Opening the first one, she read :

"My Dearest Eloise :

"I know you will rejoice with me, when I tell you yow beautifully I have succeeded with my operation. It is the marvel of the medical faculty of the city. None of the physicians present had seen one of its kind.

"Indeed, they are very rare, and fully ninety-nine per cent. die during or immediately after the operation. I certainly expect, without some unforeseen symptoms develop, to see her well and sound again. I almost feel sure that she will be restored to her widowed mother, who is entirely dependent on her for support.

"Thanks to the training I got in the German University for my ability to do it. I saw one there, and took a very minor part in it, which was almost like this one.

"I confess, in my anxiety I passed many sleepless hours before, and dared not close my eyes for some time after it was over. I felt that it would do more to establish my reputation and give prestige than one hundred ordinary cases.

"I know any one save your own dear self would

class me the veriest egotist under the sun. I must own that my pride will assert itself; for if the cure is what it promises to be, I'll not have to leave my native heath in search of patients; but will prove that the Scripture adage, 'A prophet is not without honor save in his own country,' etc., will not always hold good—with the medical fraternity, at least.

"To no one else would I let the ego take so prominent a part; but I know you feel just as much interest in the case as I do.

"My first thoughts were of you; but I would not write till a few hours had elapsed, to see if I might be able to write so sanguinely as I have. When I left her an hour ago, she was sleeping as naturally and peacefully as a child.

"I'll be with you at the earliest possible moment. It seems an age since I saw you. I am living now on the hope that only a little while longer and I will bask in the sunshine of your smiles—no matter what goes on in the outside world.

"With fondest love,

"CHARLIE."

She left the rest of her mail untouched, and flew to tell the gladsome news to her father and Aunt Lizzie.

Meeting Mammy on the stairway, she blurted out: "I tell you, Mammy, the Doctor is on the top round of the ladder now. He has succeeded beyond his own expectations, and we may expect him almost any day now."

Her father, entering the door at that moment, saw that something had happened to clear the brow and bring sunshine into the face, and guessed from whom the good news had come.

She did not wait to be questioned, but opened the letter and read that portion of it relating to his success.

"Well, well, daughter, I am delighted to hear it. Not only is it a life saved, but the reputation gained by it will be so very valuable to him. It is not often that a young man can attain prominence in any profession without years of application. But with Dr. Gray it seems that it was thrust upon him at once."

Miss Lizzie appeared at the dining-room door just as Eloise opened the letter to read to her father. She waited to hear the result, as all of them had been deeply interested in the case, and awaited the result most anxiously.

"I cannot agree with you, brother, that the prominence was thrust upon him at once. I feel that he worked very hard for it. Do you not remember how pale and hollow-eyed he looked when he came home from Germany? His looks then told plainly that he had burned the midnight oil long and often. I think they are hard-earned honors, which makes me rejoice with him the more. He deserves it all. Extend my warmest congratulations, Eloise."

"You are right, Lizzie; but hard study is not always rewarded so quickly. Add my good wishes, too."

Aunt Hannah took her seat on the stairway and was an interested listener to it all.

"God be praised for de success, I say. I hopes he ain't failed ter see de Lord's hand in it all. Dat midnight ile mighty good in its place; but ef de Lord don't take no part in it, it boun' to lose its virtue. Tell him fer me dat I hopes he give de credit to de Lord en not to his own smartness, nor dat midnight ile, neither."

Miss Lizzie and her brother could not repress a smile at Aunt Hannah's earnestness. To Eloise her words meant so much! For the first time it occurred to her that a real humble Christian would have given to God the praise, that he had been an humble instrument in his hands of accomplishing almost a miracle. As it was, there was no allusion in the whole letter to any other than "self." As he himself said, it was solely the "ego."

She felt cast down at once.

She knew that he would expect a reply by return mail; so she went at once to her room to write. She told him of the congratulations sent by her father and Aunt Lizzie; of how proud all were of him. "Mammy sends quite a lengthy message, but I'll keep that till you come."

It occurred to her that she might in that way lead him to express himself, and thus find out his convictions on a subject which she now felt was of so much importance to both.

It seemed so strange that this unlettered woman had

been able to penetrate so much more deeply into this matter than she had. She remembered the trite saying, "Love hides a multitude of faults," and saw the truthfulness of it.

He was highly cultured, with a most attractive manner of address. He had a commanding figure, a flashing black eye, and an expression which indicated strong character. His intelligence was very apparent, though he had quite a modest air, and in no way seemed to try to court attention. To her, to whom he had plighted his troth, he had seemed well-nigh perfect. Now she found herself contrasting him with the young man who came to the Saviour, and, after enumerating all of his good qualities, was told there was yet a lack of one thing. Could it be the case with this talented young man that, with all of his possessions, he had failed to take hold of the most important.

This question, to her, was assuming a grave character. She wondered why it had not forced itself on her before now. What must be the result, and how was she to meet it, were becoming burning questions which she had no idea how to answer.

She had to make one more trip to Richmond to complete her purchases and give the dressmaker an opportunity to finish up her trousseau. She determined to be just as busy as possible till Dr. Gray came, so that there would be but little time for thinking. She drew out her memorandum book and began to think of what other articles were needed. As she glanced over the

items already put down, she saw there were many additions to make of the smaller things which are so often forgotten till the very last moment. She was so busily engaged that she did not notice the arrival of a visitor.

"Let's see—gloves to match the lavender silk, lace and ribbon for same." A long-drawn sigh, and she was startled by a soft pair of hands closing over her eyes.

"Oh, Jennie, how you frightened me! You came in as stealthily as a cat. Take your hands off, that I may see you."

"No, my lady; not till you, Eloise Carter, the most highly favored lady in the land, can give some excuse for that sigh. It was enough to give one the horrors to hear it. Has the Doctor jilted you? If so, tell me quickly, that I may arrange to catch his heart in the rebound. I shall always hold it against you that you captivated him before he saw me. There, after that speech, I'll let you look at me; but, in fact, if I had seen him first I am sure I would have used all my wiles to have entrapped him. What is the matter with you, really? You do not seem to be well. I am sure if I were in your place I would not have an ache nor a pain, much less look pale and hollow-eyed. I would have a chronic case of smiles. When are you going to answer me? You might at least ask me to be seated and tell me that you are delighted to see me, for I have ordered Rob to be put in the stable and am here for the day."

“Firstly, as soon as I get an opportunity ; secondly, take this rocker here by the window and make yourself very comfortable ; thirdly, I am delighted to see you. I am so glad that you have come to spend the day. I was just thinking of writing for you to come. I am longing for a ride, and we can have a canter this afternoon. It may be that lack of exercise and loss of sleep may cause my paleness. I must get up a color, as I am expecting Dr. Gray almost any hour now. As he has not yet jilted me, I do not want to be brought into comparison with you, for I must say I never saw you looking better. I am afraid you would make quite a formidable rival.”

“What inventory was that you were taking when I surprised you so ? You left off at ‘lace for same.’”

“I had a letter from Mrs. Bryan, who is about to finish up my trousseau, and she wants me to come and try on my dresses once more before she puts the finishing touches on. There were many little articles that I knew I would need, so I concluded to put them on my memorandum book as I thought of them. Now you can suggest some things, while I am putting these down, that you feel sure I will need and be very apt to overlook. I find that I always leave off some of the most important articles when I go on a shopping excursion. The dresses and wraps are all provided for. I have all of my millinery to buy now. I was waiting till the last, so as to get good matches for my dresses.”

“What an old goose you are, Eloise! If I were engaged, I think my first purchase thereafter would be the bridal veil and orange blossoms. But I expect I would wear them out trying them on, and when the supreme hour arrived I would have to buy others.”

“I have my mother’s, and think of using them, if they are not too yellow. I shall certainly use the diamond pin with which hers was fastened. Father had it reset some time ago.”

“I am ready with my suggestions. Get your pencil ready. My ideas flow fast. You’ll have to be in a hurry. One, two, three—go! Shoes, hose, gloves, pins, needles, cotton, buttons, one box suspender buttons, assorted sizes.”

“Are you crazy, Jennie?”

“Never was more sane in my life. I heard of a newly-married pair once who went on a bridal tour and he—a luckless wight—burst off one of his suspender buttons. A man, as soon as he is married, becomes a very helpless animal, although he refers to himself as one of the lords of creation. This fellow, having married a wife, forgot how to repair damages at once. But having married a helpmeet, he called on her to get her needle, thread, scissors, thimble and buttons, and then he thought he would find out if she knew as much about sewing on buttons as he did. She stood aghast. She had not even brought along the necessary articles to repair the damages to her own wardrobe. She certainly had no thought of being

called on by him for a long time. Then she heard a long discourse on what a comfort a practical wife would be. A visit to a tailor was necessary. I made a note of that for my own benefit. You may rest assured I'll provide myself with a few dozen when I start out. Next, half dozen balls of darning cotton."

"What on earth are you thinking about, Jennie?"

"Thinking only of your future happiness, and trying to preserve you from the evil to come. Didn't old Tom Slocum take his bride home and hand her in at the front door, and, before she had time to take off her bonnet, he came in at the back with a bundle of old socks, saying, 'You can work on these, Sallie, till I find some more work for you?' Now you well know he never thought of providing the cotton or needles. If you are treated that way, thanks to me you will be provided with the proper appliances for the first greasing of your household machinery."

Her good humor was irresistible, and Eloise was already much more cheerful.

"Unfortunately," she said, "I am not to have a house. I feel cramped already. Just to think of being confined to two rooms, when I have always roamed these hills and dales at my own sweet will. It will be a novel sensation to me."

"All that may be true; but that man, as wonderful as you think he is, will wear out socks and burst off buttons just like any ordinary man. A hint to the wise should be sufficient. If you do not heed this sage

advice of mine, and the first family broil should be caused by the lack of them, you see my skirts will be clear."

She saw that her little sallies had the desired effect.

Jennie Marvin had been Eloise's boon companion all of their lives. They were nearly of the same age, and, although they were quite unlike in disposition, they had been the fastest friends.

Jennie knew as soon as she heard that sigh that something was giving her trouble. Naturally she supposed it was the thought of leaving her loved ones and the happy home.

"Now, since I've done my duty as far as the buttons, pins and needles are concerned, I'll settle down to business. I've changed my mind as to my dress for the great event. Mother insists that it shall be white satin. She offers me her point lace to trim it with. As it has seen many summers and winters pass, it has not whitened by age, but rather grown yellow. She suggests that I get cream white instead of the pearl, as it will be a better match. I intended to come one day this week, but after we discussed the question at home I concluded to come at once and get your opinion on the subject."

"I like that. It will be beautiful, and so very becoming to you. An idea has occurred to me that will settle all difficulty, I think. You go down to Richmond with me. You can take the lace along and get a good match for it. Of course, you will have Mrs. Martin to make it."

"I guess so ; but I will have to write and see what about her engagements, she has them so far ahead at this season ; though she usually saves a place for me, knowing I am always in a hurry when I come. I'll write as soon as I go home."

"There is no need to wait for that," Eloise replied ; "you'll find everything you need there in my desk, and we can mail your letter when we go out this afternoon. You write while I put these things away, and then we will go down and sit with Aunt Lizzie. I stay with her all I can, for I know she will be so lonesome when I am gone. I find myself wishing sometimes that I could transfer her, father and Mammy to my new home. That would be selfish, for neither one would be satisfied a week. Besides, I would not, for any consideration, have this dear old home broken up. I'll be able to come so often, and father and Aunt Lizzie are remarkably well and strong—they will not consider the drive anything. Poor Mammy will be the loneliest one. Since Uncle Tom was laid away she has seemed to depend on me more than ever. Do you know that she hasn't really found out that I am out of my swaddling clothes yet? It is touching to see her watchfulness over me. I told her the other day that when I got me a home I intended to have a comfortable nook for her. She said, 'Tain't a place for your Mammy to be comfortable, but a good place to look after you. I lays awake studyin' 'bout who's goin' to see to havin' your clo'es aired and your overshoes

ready, 'ca'se I mighty 'fraid dem folk ain't been use ter much where you goin'.' They would not feel very highly complimented by her opinions, do you think?"

"I guess not. I know she feels it sorely, and I expect she worries herself into sleeplessness on account of it. She has impressed me all of my life as being very much superior to most of her race. I think she has the strongest religious convictions of any one I know—certainly less of the superstitious ideas of the race than any of them."

"You are right in that. Her knowledge of the Bible is perfectly wonderful. I had no idea she knew it so thoroughly. I felt severely rebuked at my lack of it, as compared with hers. I venture she could put many an educated Christian to the blush," said Eloise.

"How in the world did she obtain it? Not being able to read, I shouldn't think she would be able to retain what she heard," said Jennie.

"She does retain it, though, and you would be surprised in what a connected way she has it—how one passage is related to another, and how one is affected by the other."

Eloise felt that the conversation, drifting into this channel without any seeming intention, was providential. She so longed to hear what some one else thought of the ideas Aunt Hannah had advanced on the union of a Christian and an unbeliever. Yet she had not been able to bring herself to the point of agitating the question. Aunt Hannah's argument had been almost con-

vincing ; at least, it looked very differently to her now. If she had felt that any one in whom she had confidence could have upset her opinions, she would gladly have gone to them. She had thought of her father, Aunt Lizzie, and Dr. Gordon, who still ministered to them. He was getting old for the pastorate, but retained his faculties, and was much more active than most men of his age. There was a strong mutual attachment between him and his church which was beautiful to behold. With few exceptions, he had baptized them all. He had officiated in nearly every family, either at the marriage altar or buried their dead. She knew his counsel would be wise ; yet she had an innate dread of approaching him on this subject. It was the first time she had ever felt towards him in this way. She had always spoken to him about any little doubts or worries which crossed her pathway. But this was so different to anything that she had ever mentioned to him. To tell him would only awaken a lack of trust in one to whom she had committed her whole future. She would have to give her reasons, and she shrank from laying bare his faults to her pastor.

She had thought over it in all of its aspects and concluded to keep her feelings concealed from living mortal, certainly till she had talked with the Doctor on the subject, which she felt she would do when he came. Each time she thought of it, it seemed to become a greater difficulty, and she wondered how she would manage to introduce the subject to him. She often said

to herself, "Oh, Mammy, if you only had known, you would not have troubled me so."

She so much hoped that Jennie might say something that would set matters right. A great many thought Jennie to be gay and frivolous, and not much given to deep thought. But Eloise knew that beneath that exterior at which only the others looked there beat a heart as true as steel. In any emergency, she knew she could always be depended on. She would have her fun—sometimes, perhaps, at another's expense. But withal she was the staunch and loyal friend.

"I'll just give you an instance of her knowledge of scripture; but I do not wish you to speak of it to another," said Eloise. "As to how she got it—in the first place, she is blessed with a remarkably retentive memory. Mother became a Christian in her early childhood, and you know Mammy nursed her and did for her just as she has for me—except her mother lived, and she did not feel the same responsibility for her that she always felt for me. She says mother always read aloud to her, and would ask what certain passages meant, and in this way they talked about it a great deal. She kept up the habit of reading to her as long as she lived, and no doubt made many things plain to her. You know I was given jointly to her, father, and Aunt Lizzie by my mother in her dying hour, with the request that I be early taught to love Jesus. Very faithfully have they done their duty, and I am sure none of my sins can be laid to their charge. The other

day she seemed greatly troubled, and I found out, by a series of questions, that it was something about me. Finally she said the Bible said a Christian and unbeliever must not marry. I laughed heartily and told her she was mistaken. She brought the Bible and told me what to find. She kept me busy for more than an hour, and I confess I was greatly startled to find out that she knew just what she was talking about. I told her the Doctor was brought up in another church, and it was only a difference of opinion as to doctrine, and need make no difference with us. But she really feels that he is not a Christian.

"By way of digression, did I tell you of his success in an operation? Not a word? But I do not think I've given you time to ask about him. He has just covered himself with glory. He writes that the whole medical faculty of the city are perfectly astounded. Not one of them had ever seen one of the kind. Fortunately, he took part in one similar while in Germany, and thus got his knowledge of it. I read what he wrote about it to father and Aunt Lizzie, and Mammy sat on the stairway and heard it all. 'Ef he had been a sure 'nough Christian he'd give God some of dat honor and glory,' she remarked. I was thinking over all these things when you surprised me. Doubtless you think I ought not to let it worry me, but it hangs over me like a great dark pall, and, try as I may, I cannot shake it off."

"I suppose she is so very close in her views as a Baptist that she thinks he must be one if he is a Christian," was Jennie's reply.

"I suggested that to her, and named over a number of our dearest Christian friends who belonged to other denominations, and we esteemed their Christian characters and loved them none the less because of their difference of opinion."

"Well, I must confess," said Jennie, "she has thought much more deeply on that subject than I ever have. You are right about her putting some of the educated to shame with her knowledge of the Bible. 'The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple,' is well illustrated in Aunt Hannah. You know, Eloise, I am not given to preaching, and I verily believe that some folks think I belong to the monkey tribe and chatter all the time, without ever having a solemn thought. They certainly make a mistake. I know I do not live as circumspectly as it is my duty and privilege to do; yet I have an abiding trust in God's promises, and believe he will hear and answer our prayers if we go to him in trust. My advice is to let it alone. You can do nothing to change it, except as you do your other cares and burdens—take it to the Lord."

"That is true. I can go to God at all times; and it may be that this is allowed, that I may win his soul, and thus have it added as the brightest star in my crown of rejoicing. My, how we've neglected Aunt Lizzie! It is nearly twelve o'clock. We'll go down at once. I had no idea we had talked so long."

"Neither did I," said Jennie. "I must not forget

to ask a dozen or more questions for mother, and certainly not fail to get the recipe for the muffins she had for tea when she was here last week. The last injunction, as I galloped away, was, 'Do not forget the recipe for the muffins.' "

CHAPTER IV.

PLEASANT VISITORS.

AFTER dinner the girls went into the parlor. Jennie played several favorite airs for the Colonel. Miss Lizzie came in with the muffin recipe and handed it to Jennie.

"I hope this is not a suggestion for me to leave, Miss Lizzie."

"No, indeed! Instead, I came to urge that you spend the night with us, and let me send a message to your mother. It has been a long time since you have given us that pleasure. Besides, I have seen so little of you to-day. I knew that you two were discussing ribbons, laces and other finery, and, as my ideas of dress are rather antiquated, I could be of no assistance by any suggestions."

Colonel Carter added his invitation to that of his sister.

"I hope you will stay, Jennie. I have been wondering how Lizzie and I will manage to get you here, when our bird has flown."

"There will be no trouble about that, I can assure you. I will be only too glad to come. I would miss the pleasure of coming much more than either of you could possibly miss my visits."

"That is real kind of you to say so, said the Colonel, "and I hope you will not forget to keep your promise."

"Father, will it be convenient for me to go to Richmond next week? Mrs. Bryan writes that she must have me once more, before she can finish my work. I have several things to buy. It seems there is no end to a wedding outfit. I am afraid I'll find an end to your purse, however."

"Perfectly convenient, dear. How much money will you need?" he asked.

"I can't say exactly, because one never knows when there is enough trimming?"

"Well, well, that can be easily arranged. I can fill out several checks, leaving the amount blank, which you can add as you need it. Get everything you want, and let it be the very best," he replied.

"Just listen to that, Jennie. It is too bad to leave such a father, isn't it?"

"No, child; I try to put self out of the question every time. It will be better thus. Lizzie and I cannot stay with you always. We will be better satisfied to see you settled in life. Do you propose to go alone? I am very busy, but will go with you if you prefer it."

"I think Jennie will go. We are going out for a ride, so we'll go there ourselves and consult Mrs. Marvin about our plans, and let her know that Jennie will spend the night here. Then we'll go to the postoffice

for the evening mail and come home—famished, I expect, Aunt Lizzie; so you can govern yourselves accordingly.”

“I’ll get an evening waist, Eloise, in case some of your numerous admirers should call.”

The horses were brought and they were off.

“I tell you, Lizzie, those two will miss each other sadly. They have always been such loving, pleasant friends. I feel sorry for them,” said the Colonel.

“Yes, brother, that is so. I am trying so hard not to be selfish about Eloise; but I feel sometimes that it will almost break my heart to be separated from her. Just to think of a real sorrow ever coming to her. We have guarded her so jealously that nothing should bring a pang to her heart. I thought, when you said what you did to her just now about her purchases, what a wonder it was that she was not a spendthrift. For never has a single expressed wish of hers been left ungratified that I can remember. Yet, with it all she is not one bit spoiled. Her ideas are not one bit extravagant. I had to insist, when we were buying her outfit, on her having several things which she said she could very well do without. She would say, ‘I feel that I commit a sin when I indulge self and know that the heathen are perishing for the bread of life.’ She knew, of course, that it would be expected by Dr. Gray’s friends for her to make a very creditable appearance.”

“As to your being selfish in anything, Lizzie, you

have no idea what the word means. If I outlive you, I think I'll have this epitaph on your tombstone: 'Sacred to the memory of Elizabeth Carter, who buried self in her girlhood, and lived only for others.'"

"I can suggest one much more fitting, and that would be, 'A sinner saved by grace.' That would speak the truth more plainly than any other you put for me. I think there is a considerable quantity of selfishness in my composition," she replied.

"If so, God's grace has been all sufficient, and you have been enabled to put it down, till not a semblance of it appears to the most critical observer."

"Look at poor Hannah. She seems to be so distressed of late. I had no idea she would grieve so about her going away. I've come upon her several times lately and found her in tears. I think since Tom's death she has felt that she was only a sojourner for a time here. She is a bright Christian," said Miss Lizzie.

"That, I think, is not to be wondered at," said Colonel Carter. "She is above the ordinary negro in intelligence, and has associated but little with them. Of course, she has in a great measure followed after those with whom she has been most closely connected. Her manner and carriage indicate that. I've expected to hear her propose to go with Eloise, as she still seems to feel all the responsibility she did when she was a child."

"I, too, have expected her to say she was going.

She was worrying the other day for fear she would not have her clothing and room properly aired, and would leave off her overshoes at the wrong time. The girls have a beautiful afternoon for their ride. I think I'll give orders for an early tea, as they will have good appetites after their long ride. I will not be at all surprised to see the Doctor at any time. I will order broiled chicken and tongue, for he is specially fond of both."

"While you are looking after the creature comforts of others I'll look after my own and take a nap. Do not allow me to sleep too long. I want to ride over to see about the sheep. I think I'll have them transferred to the pasture nearest the 'quarters.' I hear that a dog or dogs have worried several flocks below here. The Widow Smith had several fine ones killed. I'll be glad if you will send John for Trent. I want him here at five o'clock. Also tell him to have my horse ready at that time. Now I'll sleep a little," he said.

Broiled chicken, tongue and muffins were added to the order for supper, on account of the premonition of extra guests. Several other little household duties were attended to. She saw Mr. Trent coming, and called her brother.

Mr. Trent came to the porch and they discussed the removal of the sheep, and decided it would be much better to bring them nearer the house.

"Though," said Mr. Trent, "it seems when the notion takes the dog he'll come right into the yard. I

was coming to the house to see you about this when John came for me. Joe Smith had just passed up the road. I asked him about the killing of his mother's sheep. Would you believe it, sir? It was that worthless cur of Tom Watson's, that ought to have been killed months ago. He killed that Shropshire ram, for which she paid fifty dollars when it was only six months old. They were in that pasture just opposite the house. The hands were at work some distance off, and it was several minutes before they got there. So intent was he, that Joe got near enough to shoot before he saw him. He did not kill him outright, and he went yelping off in the direction of home. Joe went back to the house and got his horse and rode after him. When he got there Tom's wife and children were out crying over him. He says it made him so mad that he forgot his manners. He asked if Tom was at home, but he was not. He told her to get the children out of the way. She refused at first; but when she saw him level his gun, she didn't stand on the order of her going. He killed him and went to the house to explain his reason for it. She wouldn't listen to him at all. Said she knew 'Tige' wouldn't be caught killing sheep—he was too well raised; wanted to know how he knew he killed the right dog. Said no doubt Tom would make him pay dearly for it. As soon as she stopped long enough to give him a chance to explain, he told her about shooting him right on the sheep. 'Besides,' he said to her, 'I guess the pay will

have to come from Tom, as mother paid fifty dollars for the sheep, and there will be other costs, and it may be a fine for keeping such a dog.' At that she changed her tune and expressed great sorrow. She said it would ruin them if Tom had to pay that much, and she hoped Mrs. Smith would let them off with less. Joe said he knew Tom couldn't pay it, but when she got so angry and talked so much, he couldn't help giving her a scare. Tom went over as soon as he got home. He expressed many regrets and made many apologies for his wife. He said he would be willing to pay the whole amount if he could, but would do the best he was able to do. Mrs. Smith told him as long as the dog was killed, she would let the matter drop. He seemed greatly relieved."

Mr. Trent called three of the hired men, and they went to transfer the sheep.

Miss Lizzie, dressed in a cool, fresh muslin, came out on the porch—still strongly of the opinion that her premonitions would prove correct. She saw the dust rising and discovered a horseman approaching. It proved to be only the colored boy by whom Jennie had sent her dress, while she and Eloise continued their ride.

He dismounted and brought the basket to the porch.

"Here's Miss Jinnie's dress what she sent, 'ca'se she and Miss Luisa dey gone t'other way. Dey say dey be here 'bout six. En Miss Alice she say she much erbleged for dat paper 'bout dem nuffins, en she gwine ter speriment on 'em fer supper."

As soon as he delivered his message he was gone.

Miss Lizzie was restless, and went to see again that everything was all right in the dining room. She found Mary busy polishing the silver and getting everything in readiness.

She heard the tinkling of the bells and the bleating of the sheep, and knew that her brother was close by. She walked out to see them put the sheep into the field. For a wonder, the leader seemed to be struck with the idea of going in the right direction, and they found it an easy matter

“Come, brother, and brush off your dust and get ready; the girls will be here soon.”

Pretty soon after taking his seat on the porch, he saw riders approaching.

“Why, Lizzie, each of the girls has an escort. They have been lucky each to get one. Let’s see—yes, that is the Doctor’s grey mare, but the other one I do not know. It is a handsome animal, though. I’ll have to congratulate Jennie on not being that proverbial crowd, ‘two is company,’ eh? That gentleman with Jennie is a stranger in this section, I am sure—some friend of the Doctor’s, I guess.”

He left the porch and sauntered slowly down to the gate by the time the riders had dismounted.

“How are you, Doctor? Glad to see you, sir. But you are no taller. Didn’t know but what I would have to look up to you.”

“No, no, my stature has not visibly increased, sir.

Allow me, Colonel, to present my friend and school-fellow, Fred Young, of New Jersey. I took the privilege of bringing him along, knowing that he was sure, as I told him, to have an old Virginia welcome."

"Most happy to meet you, Mr. Young, and, as you are not a Virginian, to make you most welcome to Virginia's hospitality. It is a trite saying with us that the latch-string always hangs on the outside of old Virginia doors."

They went in and were introduced to Miss Lizzie. They sat for awhile on the porch.

"I tell you, Miss Lizzie, I've been thinking of your supper ever since I left home, and hoped to arrive in time to have broiled chicken added, but we were a little late starting."

Colonel Carter laughed and said :

"Thanks, Doctor, to one of Lizzie's premonitions of extra company, the chickens are already broiling, I expect."

"Good ! I told Fred it was worth the ride here to get one of Miss Lizzie's delightful suppers. I was getting ready to start as early as possible, when who should appear, like an apparition, but this fellow. He announced at once that he was a self-invited guest of mine for a few days. 'If that is so,' I said, 'I'll entertain you to suit myself.' He said, 'Barkis is willing.' I replied, 'As soon, then, as Barkis gets his dinner we will go out into the country. How will that suit you?' 'Just the thing I would most like,' he said. 'I won-

dered if I would find you too busy to show me any of the surrounding country.' I didn't have time to explain till we were on our way. He wanted to know why I didn't tell him, so that he could have brought along an evening suit."

"I hope you will make yourself quite at home, Mr. Young, and enjoy our delightful air and cool breezes," said Miss Lizzie. "And now, Doctor, John is ready to show you to your room, and by the time you have brushed off the dust, supper will be ready. If you do not hurry you will find your chicken overdone, I am afraid."

When they came down, they found the ladies awaiting them. They were telling the Colonel and Miss Lizzie of their accidental meeting, just as they neared the postoffice.

"Now, Colonel," said Jennie, "do you not think that Mr. Young deserves a chromo for coming with the Doctor, and thus preventing me from assuming that most awkward position of a third party."

"Indeed, I do. I told Lizzie, when I saw you coming, that I meant to congratulate you on your good luck, but I had not had an opportunity to do so."

This was Mr. Young's first visit to Virginia. As he observed the well-filled table, and saw with what ease and grace they entertained, he was not surprised at the reputation Virginia had for her hospitality. He did not wonder at his friend's enthusiastic description of the home and family, and could but admire his se-

lection of a wife. He had known of the engagement for some time, and the Doctor had written him quite an extravagant description of his *fiancée*, but he remembered such loud praise from an ardent lover should always be taken *cum grano salis*.

The whole party did full justice to Miss Lizzie's supper, much to her satisfaction. She was a model house-keeper, and, like all such, loved to have her viands enjoyed. She insisted on each one eating more, affirming that none of them seemed to have an appetite.

"I object, Miss Lizzie, as I fear I would have to establish a hospital, and I came without my chest of medicines," said the Doctor.

They took a little stroll, as there yet remained some minutes of daylight. The evening was spent in pleasant converse and music.

Mr. Young was a fine vocalist, and they enjoyed his songs very much.

Eloise and Jennie played several instrumental selections, when Colonel Carter came in from the porch, where he had remained when the young people went to the parlor.

"Jennie has done herself no credit at all," he said—"I mean as a real musician. Her forte is singing those grand old Scotch airs, which have more music in them than all of the fashionable music you can find in these days. Why, I wouldn't give her rendering of 'Blue-Eyed Mary' for everything both have played to-night."

"Now, Fred, here is a chance for the display of your voice. He is of Scotch descent, and nothing gives him more pleasure than to revel in those old Scotch ballads."

"We may expect something grand, then," said the Colonel, "for when you hear Jennie, you will think she was to the heather born, so naturally does she sing them."

"I fully agree with you, Colonel. They are grand. I went with my mother to visit her relatives in Scotland when a boy, and I confess I have been right much of a Scotchman ever since. We were there a year, and in that time I imbibed a fondness for everything Scotch—except the bag-pipe. I attended a select school while there with some of my young kinsmen. The students were a happy, bright lot, and some of them were quite musical. I fell into many of their ways, and since then I've been an admirer of their songs."

"Miss Carter, have you any of the songs?"

"Oh, yes; Jennie knows just where to find them, for she is called on every time she comes."

"Here is the portfolio, Mr. Young," said Jennie. "Make your own selection; I am familiar with all of them."

One after another was chosen. Mr. Young and Jennie sang well together. They were all surprised at the lateness of the hour when the Doctor took out his watch and announced that it was after eleven o'clock.

There was one duty never neglected in that household, it mattered not who the guests were—family worship. Usually, it was in Colonel Carter's room, but occasionally, when strangers were present, they all assembled in the parlor.

Aunt Hannah always remained in the house until after that time. For one reason, she really enjoyed it, and she always liked to see that Eloise had everything made comfortable for her every night.

Miss Lizzie quietly laid the Bible near the lamp. Her brother took it up and read the twenty-third Psalm. After the reading, they knelt and he offered a fervent prayer for each one present.

Mr. Young could not understand Aunt Hannah's position in the family. He observed her closely as she brought a small chair and placed it just outside the parlor door, where she seemed to be a reverent and interested listener. To him it was a novel sight. He observed that she was treated with the greatest respect by all of the family.

After they went to their room he asked Dr. Gray what position she held in the family.

"Now, Fred, that is a luxury you Yankees have never enjoyed—a black mammy. We Virginians class them along with our other attainments which put us ahead of the common herd. Aunt Hannah has been in this family all of her life. She nursed Mrs. Carter, and came with her as maid when she married Colonel Carter. She died when Eloise was just two years old,

and on her death-bed she gave her into the keeping of the three you've seen to-night. When Lee surrendered and freedom came to her, she spurned the idea of leaving the 'baby,' as she still calls Eloise."

"Ah, I see how it is that she has the post of honor. I could but observe her during the time of worship, how devoutly she seemed to enter into the service. I say, Charlie, is all Virginia like this? If so, you may count me a citizen of the Old Commonwealth at once. I have never enjoyed an evening at a strange place so much in my life. Every one of them treated me as a personal friend. I would like to know if Miss Marvin is 'heart-whole and fancy free.' She is a charming young woman. How far is her home from here? Have you known her long?"

"Stop, if you please, Fred, and ask one question only at a time. I don't know how you do in New Jersey, but when our lawyers get a witness on the stand, they have one question answered at a time. Do you put them to them by the dozen and let them answer at their leisure? That is what you have done now. While I did not take them down in regular order, I'll try to give you the desired information, to the best of my knowledge and ability. She lives about two and a half miles from here. She and Eloise have been the fastest friends. The two families are quite congenial. Now, as to the 'heart whole and fancy free' part, I cannot answer truly; I know she has many admirers. I expect she has or could have had

an offer from every young man for miles around, besides numberless city swains who visit her. I was thinking if you were in that state, it would not be long before you would fall a victim."

"I was fully so up to a couple of hours ago, but will not be so sure about it now. She has a magnificent voice. I've never heard any one who could sing 'Annie Laurie' as she did to-night," he replied.

"Get to bed, old fellow! I can make a diagnosis of your case in my sleep. I'll give you the prescription right now. 'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady.' Enter the race, no matter how many contestants there may be. Go in to win. You have my best wishes. Good-night."

They were up by six o'clock, feeling as fresh as possible. They went out for a walk.

Fred Young and Charles Gray met for the first time at school, where they were assigned to the same room. About the same thought came to each—"Shall I like him? Can there be any affinity between us?" Time answered the questions. No truer friendship had ever existed. Although they parted—one to take his degree at Yale, the other one first at the University of Virginia, and then at a celebrated German University—they had always kept up a correspondence.

Dr. Gray had on several occasions, when in New York, gone to his friend's home for a day or two, but until now he had not the pleasure of entertaining him.

"I am specially glad, Charlie, that I found you so

heart-hungry for this visit. I would not have missed it for a great deal."

"I knew you would enjoy it, and I really believe that unexpected pleasures are always more appreciated. I am very glad that we found Miss Jennie here. She is a remarkably entertaining young lady. I wish we had time to visit her at her home."

When they got in sight they saw that the young ladies were already down.

Breakfast was soon announced. At the table Jennie said :

"Doctor, excuse my seeming curiosity—I believe you gentlemen say we have it all—in asking what time you will return to the city?"

"Certainly, Miss Jennie ; but let me disabuse your mind as to the ladies having all of the curiosity ; for this friend of mine plied me with so many questions that I had to order him to bed, in order to sleep at all. Now for the question. We have decided, as there is a full moon, to stay till about nine o'clock, and enjoy a moonlight ride home."

"I am glad to hear that. I hope you will give us the pleasure of having you to take tea with us at Belmont. That will be about three miles on your way. I am sure mother would be delighted to have you."

"And I am sure that we will accept the invitation with much pleasure," replied Dr. Gray.

"Of course, Colonel Carter, Miss Lizzie and Eloise will join us. I forgot to mention that," she said.

“Miss Marvin, I must be allowed to defend myself against the charge brought by my friend Gray, that I am the only man with superabundance of curiosity, for I can assure you that he asks so many questions that I sometimes think him a veritable Yankee. I must add my thanks for the invitation. I have heard all my life of the ‘garden spot’ of Virginia. I think I must have had the good fortune to have reached it at once.”

CHAPTER V.

THE INDIAN LEGEND.

Soon after breakfast Jennie ordered her horse and made ready to leave.

Eloise saw there was certain to be a dilemma—as neither gentleman would feel at all comfortable to see her ride away alone. She quickly thought of a plan by which any unpleasantness might be avoided.

She had seen the two glance askance at each other, and knew quite well what was passing through their minds.

Turning to Jennie, who had just come out ready to start, she said :

“I think as this is Mr. Young’s first visit in our section of the State, that it would be really unkind in us not to take him to the scene of our only Indian legend in this neighborhood. I propose, if it meets the approval of the entire party, that we order the other horses, and, after going by with Jennie to tell her mother of our proposed visit this afternoon, we extend our ride to the Indian Spring. Jennie being gifted as a story-teller, we will depute her to give us the legend as we look into the waters of this lovely spring. What say you?”

“I must say, Miss Carter, you have put me under

still another obligation. I could not have arranged one-half so well," said Mr. Young.

"And I will say that I will be pleased to have your company, and will try to give you the very best version of this legend in the memory of the oldest inhabitant," replied Jennie.

All eyes turned to Dr. Gray for his reply.

"Words are inadequate to express my admiration for Miss Carter as a schemer. I knew if we allowed Miss Jennie to go alone our prestige for gallantry would be forever lost. On the other hand, I could not decide which one of us should have the privilege of escorting her. But this arrangement makes it perfectly agreeable to all parties."

The horses were soon ready and they set out, with the understanding that they would return for an early dinner.

When they reached Mrs. Marvin's it was agreed that they would not dismount, except Jennie, who would tell her mother of their arrangements and join them quickly.

Mrs. Marvin was sitting on the porch, busy with some sewing, when she saw them coming. She was looking for Jennie, and fully expected Eloise to come with her. She wondered who their escorts could be.

Jennie ran quickly up to the porch and told her mother of their plans. She walked back with her to the gate and was introduced to Mr. Young.

Dr. Gray dismounted as he saw her coming. As he offered his hand, she said :

"I must extend my congratulations on the fame you have achieved, Doctor; I was just reading of it in the Richmond paper. I am always gratified when any Virginian does well, but especially so if that Virginian is numbered among my personal friends."

"Thank you," he said. "I can assure you I feel very grateful for the many kind and pleasant wishes of my friends."

"Jennie tells me that you will be with us to tea. I am very glad she thought to give us such a pleasure. I hope you'll come early. Remember, Doctor, we are quite old-fashioned in our notions."

Jennie mounted, and they soon found themselves at the spring. It was indeed a beautiful, romantic spot. The same old trees were casting their shade, and the same waters were winding their several ways to the James, as when the Indian brave and his dusky sweetheart met death here, clasped in each other's arms.

"Now for a drink of the purest water in the State," said Eloise, as they dismounted.

"And not a drinking-cup in the party, I'll be bound," said Dr. Gray, "and we knew we would be quite famished when we saw this beautifully clear water. Why did none of us think of it?"

"Who would use a conventional cup here? I am surprised at you. It must be nature's own handiwork at such a spring as this. Jennie and I have drank here too often not to know how to improvise a cup. What do you suppose that poplar and this thorn grew

so close by for? If you cut a dozen thorns I'll soon prove their use."

Very deftly the fingers of the girls worked for a moment or so, and each one had a cup fit for a king.

"Now, Mr. Young, I know you'll agree with me that these are much more suitable for such a spring than the most handsomely chased silver one to be found at Tiffany's, especially as we are to swallow with the water an old Indian love story," said Eloise.

"Indeed, I do. I begin to regret that I was not raised in the country. It seems to me that those who are can so much better adapt themselves to circumstances than we city-bred fellows," said Mr. Young.

"Miss Marvin, I am getting anxious to hear that legend. Do let us have it."

They seated themselves on a large, moss-covered stone, and announced their readiness to listen.

"Of course, you'll have to allow me the privilege of all story-tellers," she said.

"Certainly," they answered.

"Once upon a time—and that time is supposed to be early in 1700—there roamed over this part of the State quite a large tribe of Indians. The chief had many daughters, but one of the number seemed to have been his favorite, and also of many of the braves of the tribe. Her unpronounceable Indian name meant Bright Eyes, and by that we will know her.

"One after another of the braves laid his heart at her feet. To each one she gently answered, 'no.'

“At last came Timid Deer, and for the first time was any emotion shown. This spring was their favorite resort. Probably this very stone, if it could speak, could tell us volumes, could we but interpret their language. Excuse the digression.

“Her father was very angry when he knew that Timid Deer was her choice. This name had been given him in derision. He was tall, straight and handsome—just the one to win an Indian maiden’s heart. But he seemed to be lacking in the qualities which would recommend him to his fellow-braves. In the chase he was as fleet as the fleetest. Yet no other arrow flew so wide of the mark as his. Everything that had life seemed to appeal to him. His belt carried not a single scalp, and he became a by-word with the others. We can imagine why he should be the very last to confess his love to Bright Eyes. He knew how he was derided by the others, and he dared not tell her, for fear that she, too, shared their opinions.

“Chance often threw them in company, and he somehow discovered, to his great joy, that one heart in the tribe beat in unison with his.

“The old chief was furious, and declared the marriage should never be. He selected for her Man of Many Scalps, a bloodthirsty, ill-natured fellow, who was a bitter, implacable enemy to the white man, and in fact to those of his own race, if they dared to cross his path.

“Her heart quailed within her at this announcement.

She pleaded with him not to force her to this ; but he was obdurate. 'Spare, oh, spare me, just two moons more !' she begged. Give me my freedom just two moons longer !'

" 'No, no,' he replied ; 'two suns more shall set, and then you will be the wife of Man of Many Scalps. Timid Deer 'fraid of shadow. He no brave. Kill no white man. Two suns more. Do you hear?'

"Poor Bright Eyes wended her way hither. Soon she was joined by Timid Deer. She told him of her father's decision. In vain they tried to think of some way to circumvent the old chief.

"At last Bright Eyes said : 'Let's go together to the happy hunting grounds. There will be no Man of Many Scalps there.'

"He was wild with joy at her proposition.

" 'Two suns more,' he said. 'To-morrow at this time we will meet here, and there will be no more trouble for us. Remember, Bright Eyes, I'll make all things ready and we will not be seen together again.'

"She went about her duties quietly, and to all appearances she even listened with seeming attention to the arrangements made by her father and Man of Many Scalps for the approaching marriage. She acquiesced in all their plans, and each felt confident that all was well.

"The absence of Timid Deer was not noticed, as it often happened for days that he was not seen. To the great relief of Bright Eyes, the other one, too, was

away. He had crossed the river to watch the movements of some white families who were making a settlement on the other side. He was an adept at pilfering, and expected to add to his riches from their store. If chance put one in his way he certainly would not scruple to add another to the long string of scalps which had given him his *sobriquet*.

"She was seen to go in the same direction soon after his departure ; but, after getting well out of sight, she turned her course and wended her way here. She was soon joined by Timid Deer, who brought with him the poisoned arrows.

"After chanting the funeral dirge they each plunged an arrow into the heart.

"When night came on, and neither Bright Eyes nor Timid Deer was at the wigwam, suspicion was aroused.

"The old chief summoned his braves, and a search was made. As several had seen Bright Eyes go in an opposite direction, they did not come here at first.

"Soon after daylight, a party, headed by the chief himself, came to this spot, to find them clasped in each other's arms, and swollen almost beyond recognition from the poisoned arrows.

"It is said they were buried, just as they died, under that large pine there.

"The credulous negroes aver that at night they see strange things and hear queer sounds as they pass. They say it is the Indian dirge they hear chanted. I suppose it is only the sighing of the wind through the

piners. I am sure I had just as soon hear a veritable dirge as that uncanny sound. It always seems to me as a requiem for lost souls.

"I hope I have not made you feel 'creepy,' Mr. Young."

"No, indeed. I have enjoyed your story immensely. I always loved to hear Indian stories. As a boy I longed to visit the places made famous by the first settlements in our country. I have often promised myself a trip for the sole purpose of visiting some of them. I little thought, when I left home, that I should have this pleasure. I cannot think how I shall ever be able to return the kindness."

They took another quaff from the spring.

Just as they were about to mount, Jennie said :

"I almost forgot to tell another superstition connected with it, and that is if you are here exactly at the same hour on which they died, you will see their reflection in the water, instead of your own. I've looked in many times, but no other face save my own has been reflected."

The trio proceeded on their way after leaving Jennie at Belmont. It was eleven o'clock, and they knew they were expected by the household at Sunny-meade.

Miss Lizzie had the early dinner, and they spent the time till four o'clock in general conversation, when they set out for Belmont.

They found Mrs. Marvin to be a most charming

hostess, and she entertained them in the most agreeable manner till tea-time.

The table, with its snowy napery, beautiful china and silver, of itself looked very inviting. In addition to this, everything was faultlessly cooked.

Again was Mr. Young impressed with the lavishness of the spread. At his home an invitation to tea generally meant a cold collation, with hot tea, coffee or chocolate.

He knew that Mrs. Marvin had no notice of their coming till that morning. He saw then that she did not appear in any way perturbed by the announcement, but very gracefully seconded her daughter's invitation.

"Miss Marvin, I must have some of your music before we leave. I enjoyed your songs very much last night," Mr. Young said to Jennie.

"Certainly; we will go to the parlor at once. We are all passionately fond of music, and all play after a fashion. I would like you to hear my younger sister and brother, if I can prevail on them to play. They are quite shy of strangers and do not like to come in."

Mrs. Marvin left the room and soon returned with the two. Each had an instrument.

Mrs. Marvin went to the piano, Jennie got out her violin, Belle the guitar, and Elmer his flute.

They played several selections, and the boy and girl quietly left the room.

The Doctor put his head in at the window and said:

"Only one half hour more, Fred, for music. We

must be off at that time, if we expect to get any sleep at all. If there are no calls for me at my office, I'll go on home with you and get a good night's rest. I feel that a week like the last two days would quite refresh me, and make me feel like another man."

"Give us 'Good-Bye,' Miss Jennie, and we will go, as I see our horses are at the gate."

It was a lovely night, and, as they rode on, each was filled with his own thoughts.

Dr. Gray had discovered new beauties in the character of his affianced which he had thought it not possible to do, as he had imagined he had found one almost perfect.

They arrived at the Doctor's office, and found such a reassuring note as to the condition of his patients that he concluded to go at once to his room.

Passing the note to his friend, he said :

"It would have been a fine joke if I had stayed long enough to allow them all to get well, and find myself without patients. An old friend of mine tells it, as a joke on himself, that he got sick one time, and recovered so slowly that all of his patients got out and came to see him, even his chronic cases. He said he stood it all very well till one day a visitor was announced, and in walked an old fellow who had been advised by him to make his will and settle up his business, as his days were numbered. 'That,' he said, 'was the straw which broke the camel's back, and you may be assured I lost no time in getting out, for I saw my living was lost if

I stayed in longer.' I must see what I can do for your entertainment to-morrow. Though I do not think it will be very long before you turn your face in this direction again ; I think I can discern the future to some extent."

"That remains to be seen. I admit that this heart of mine, which heretofore has been thought by my friends to be made of adamant, has received an impression. However, I must not rush into danger, but must calmly take my bearings and see what is ahead of me. It will never do to go blindly into a matter of so much moment. I'll say this much, if there is any chance to win, I am in for the race. I enjoyed my trip so very much. I never saw two more lovely homes than those you introduced me into," was Fred's honest reply. "I could but wonder all the time that Mrs. Marvin should remain a widow. She is rather young looking, handsome, and very attractive in manner."

"Now do not go to match-making, Fred. It is quite a thankless task. Though some of the neighborhood gossips have hinted that she and Colonel Carter would make a match, I hardly think so. Both seem so wedded to their families and to the memory of husband and wife."

The next morning they started out rather early. Dr. Gray wanted to talk over his plans for his bridal outing with his friend. He said :

"I am glad to be able to say to you in person what I had intended to write you in a few days. It is so

much more satisfactory. The exact date has not been definitely determined on yet for our marriage. I am anxious to spend a month at Niagara and other points of interest, either on the Lakes, or the Catskills, or Adirondacks. We have not quite made up our minds yet. We will, of course, expect you to be present. It was my intention to write to you as soon as a date was decided on."

"Let me help you to a decision by making a suggestion, which you will see at once is not altogether unselfish."

"I am sure I'll be obliged for one," said Dr. Gray.

"To Niagara, then, by all means, and there are many points of interest near by which you can easily reach from there, and will consume but little time. A trip then by steamer to Montreal and Quebec; thence by one of the numerous routes to Champlain, and on to the Adirondacks. I have a friend there who keeps one of the best resorts in this or any other country. He always has the most select crowds, and his rooms are always engaged by the opening of the season. If you can induce Miss Jennie to go with you, I would join the party at my very earliest convenience, and there would be no third party 'crowd.' Do you see?"

"I see, certainly, that you are truthful at least when you own that you are not a disinterested party. I feel certain that the arrangement will suit Eloise, and think there will be no doubt about Miss Jennie's willingness to go along. She is always ready for fun and pleasure.

I have been anxious to take my sister along, and that will suit exactly. I'll write at once and unfold your plan, and through Eloise present the invitation to Miss Jennie," was the Doctor's reply.

"In the meantime I will write to my friend and tell him of our intentions, and get him to hold for us a certain cottage, which I consider the most desirable there. The scenery from its porch is most inspiring. He can hold that one till he hears positively from us. His terms are quite moderate, when the *cuisine* and other accommodations are considered."

"That is a capital arrangement, and I hope it can be carried out to the letter, and all the hopes of the party be fully realized," was the reply.

"To which I say a hearty amen. I go as far south as Atlanta, but will remain only a few days. I'll direct him to write to me at this point, and by the time I return I hope all parties may have been heard from, and we can complete our plans before I go home. I will have to emulate the beaver in industry to get my business in good shape so that I can enjoy the trip."

"Well, here is my buggy. We'll talk as we go. I must see all my patients, but will make my visits short, except in cases of necessity," replied Dr. Gray.

"This is a pretty old town, and it looks as if your craft might find it distressingly healthy."

"It is a fairly healthful city, and we are never visited by epidemics. This is the home of my famous patient; I may stay a little long here. Suppose you

drive up several squares and turn to your left and come down to this street again. It will be more pleasant than sitting alone."

When he got back he found the Doctor on the pavement waiting for him.

"I found my patient so near convalescent, I did not have to stay long. Her gratitude is overwhelming. I scarcely know what to say to her. I told her I thought I was to be under obligations, as so few would have submitted to the operation. I was perfectly candid with her and told her just how slim her chances were ; but it was her only hope. So many would have given up in despair. But for the sake of her widowed mother, whose only support she is, she took the great risk."

CHAPTER VI.

A VISIT TO RICHMOND.

ELOISE spent the night at Belmont, that she and Jennie might arrange for their Richmond trip.

Colonel Carter and Miss Lizzie drove home soon after the departure of the other guests.

The girls very soon retired to their rooms—but certainly not to sleep. There was so much to be talked over, and it was the first time they had had an opportunity to exchange opinions of their new acquaintance.

Jennie asked :

“How did you like Mr. Young, Eloise?”

“I was charmed with him ; but, having heard so much of him, I was prepared to like him. Of course, as he and the Doctor are such fast friends, I had heard only his good qualities portrayed, and am not at all disappointed. This meeting, however, was quite unexpected. I knew he was to be here at our marriage, and thought I had spoken to you about him.”

“No, I never heard of him before, and he would have been no more of a surprise if he had dropped from the clouds.”

“Well, give your opinion of him, then,” Eloise said.

“It is quite like your own. Of course, while first impressions are generally most lasting, I think in meet-

ing strangers we should be very careful in forming our estimates of them."

"In this case I am afraid he was not very prudent, then, in forming his. If ever I have seen a case of love at first sight, this was one. I am sure, if he had consulted his own inclination, he would have kept you singing your Scotch ballads till now. Dr. Gray shared my opinion on the subject. He said he thought he would never allow him to get to sleep at all last night. He is a talented lawyer, with a very lucrative practice for so young a man, Dr. Gray thinks. We will have to calmly rest on our oars and see what we shall see. Is that it, Jennie?"

"I know of nothing else to do, and I am Presbyterian enough to believe 'what's to be will be'—if it never happens."

"What does Mrs. Marvin say about your trip to Richmond?"

"She is quite willing, and approves of our plans. Have you decided as to the time?"

"If next Monday suits you I would prefer that day. We can get through with everything and get home before Sunday. I do not wish to be absent from my class. I am so interested in my boys. They are mostly a bright and studious set of boys. I am troubled about a teacher for them. There are four unconverted ones yet; they are the objects of prayer, and I hope to see them safely in the fold before I leave them. I have so longed to have at least one of them called of God to

preach. I feel that it may be realized in Gordon Glenn. He has very clear convictions on all religious subjects, and I am sure he is deeply thinking on this subject. While his aspirations lead him in an entirely different direction now, I am sure all of his hopes and aims will succumb to God's call, if it pleases him to send it."

Eloise left early for home the next morning to complete her arrangements. As she rode along she thought over all that transpired during the Doctor's visit. She was so happy when with him that she could not bring herself to the point of broaching the subject which for days had caused her so much anxiety. She tried in vain to think of something he had said that would be reassuring that his heart was stayed on higher and holier things than those of this world.

She reasoned with herself in this wise. It had been more than a month since she had seen him, and very naturally there were many things to be said. The final details of their wedding tour were to be settled, and they had but little time alone.

He had left for her to choose a place to quietly spend two weeks of the time, after seeing New York, Niagara and some other points. They did not decide whether it should be one of the many delightful resorts in the Adirondacks or Catskills. It had been her dream to visit these places, and a prospect of the realization made it hard to decide just where they would rest.

She spent the day in arranging for her trip. There

were so many things to be thought of. Every now and then her aunt would come in and add some item to the already long list.

"I think you have certainly completed it now, Eloise. I had no idea there would be so many things to buy," she said.

"There is only one thing more. Mammy must have a nice black dress and a suitable cap for the occasion. She will want to look her best."

"What is troubling her, Eloise? I have come upon her suddenly several times and found her weeping. She says it is not that you are going away. I thought she would feel so lonely and miss Tom more."

"Poor old body! She will not be long in her loneliness, I am afraid. Her race is almost run. I can see that she fails all the time. I know she will grieve sorely for me.

"This trunk is ready and I am free for the rest of the day. I'll hunt father and see if he will go with me to see about Tommy Clark. He was absent from his class last Sunday, and I am sure there must be something wrong, as he is always in place promptly."

She soon found her father, and as usual, her will was his pleasure. They were soon on their way. Much to her surprise, she found all four of the children down with measles.

Mrs. Clark saw them coming and went out quickly to meet them. She was afraid that if Eloise had not

had the disease, she would not be willing to come in. In answer to her inquiry, Eloise replied :

“ Oh, yes, Miss Clark, I’ve been through the whole catalogue—chicken-pox, measles, mumps, whooping-cough, etc.”

“ I am certainly glad to hear you say so, for my Tommy has begged me to send for you ; says he wants to tell you something. After they all broke out I thought it might not be right to send for you. I heard, too, that you had company.”

“ I am sorry you did not send. Has he been very sick ?”

“ No, not after he was well broken out. Before that he said he thought his head would burst. He had very high fevers, and was a little delirious for a day and night. His whole talk was about Sunday-school and Bob Sims. I guess Bob is so bad, he thought he was troublesome to you.”

They went in to see the children, who were all begging for something good to eat. They said : “ Mother’s cooking is not good like it used to be.”

Eloise could but laugh as she thought of her own experience. She begged Aunt Lizzie to get another cook. She couldn’t feel that the disease and not the cook was responsible.

She amused the children very much by relating her experience, and the mother was grateful for the surcease of complaints for a time at least.

She went over to Tommy’s cot and put her hand on

his forehead. He looked up into her face, and, with a smile, said:

"Miss Eloise, I've trusted Jesus since I saw you. I have joined our band, and I have been trying to pray for Bob Sims. I know now that Jesus is willing to save Bob. The trouble is, I'm afraid Bob ain't willing. But it is mostly the Ferguson boys that is the matter with Bob. They won't go to church, and do all they can to keep him away. But he loves you, and hates not to please you."

"You have no idea how happy you have made me, Tommy. I have expected it, though. You know we have God's promise that where two or three even are agreed to ask a thing in his name, he will surely answer. I think now we must agree upon another thing, and that is to make the Ferguson boys objects of our special prayers. If we can change them, or, rather, if God's grace changes them, we will be able to do more for Bob. I am so glad you told what the trouble is. I'll mention it to each of the band, and, in addition to that, we will make an effort to get them interested in Sunday-school. I'll be away from home all of next week, but expect to return in time for Sunday, and hope you will be well enough to meet with us. I am sure you will be able to come if the weather is at all suitable. You must be very careful and not take cold. It might cause some serious trouble. I see that your mother is keeping a dark room and guarding your eyes. That is well, as so often serious injury is done to the eyes by

lack of proper care. I am glad that you are all doing so well.

"I know you will feel greatly relieved, Mrs. Clark, when they are all out again."

"Indeed, I will. I've been kept pretty close; but know I'll not be troubled with it again."

"I am ready, father," said Eloise.

Mrs. Clark insisted that they stay longer, and expressed her appreciation of the visit.

"Daughter, I would like to go about a half mile farther down the road. I want to get one of the Hart boys to do some work for me next week. I noticed that several of the out-houses need repairing, as well as the fences. 'A stitch in time saves nine,' the old adage says. I might have gone there while you paid your visit, if I had only thought of it in time."

"I am glad you did not. I want to go that way. We will have to pass the Ferguson's on our way there, I think."

"Yes, they live, or rather exist, just this side of Hart's," he replied.

Just as they came near the house, Eloise saw three boys, with their fishing rods, coming up from the opposite direction. One she recognized as Bob Sims.

"Stop, father; I'll get out and see Mrs. Ferguson while you go on your errand."

The boys had stopped, and were watching to see who was passing. They certainly did not think of any one stopping there, or they would have been out of sight

before she had time to get out of the buggy. As it was, they were so bewildered when Colonel Carter turned his horse, and she jumped out right in their midst, that they seemed fairly rooted to the ground.

Bob was the first to recover from his astonishment and reply to her hearty greeting :

"How do you do, boys? Where did you catch those beauties? I had no idea we had such fine fish near us."

"Down there," with a nod of his head in the direction from which they came, "in Davis' mill pond. Get heap bigger ones than these sometimes."

"Is that so? Then I would like to go with you some day. I haven't been fishing since I was a little girl."

The boys eyed her from head to foot; then they looked at each other, as if to say, "She can't fool us; we know she wouldn't be caught with us."

This thought passed through her mind, as she eyed them just as critically as they did her: "Perhaps this is my opportunity; I may reach them in this way. The Lord had said to his disciples of old, 'I will make you fishers of men;' and may not I, while catching fish in the mill-pond, win these boys to a better life? It is worth the trial."

"Would you let me go with you some day?" she asked.

"Yes'm, if you want to," Aleck Ferguson answered.

"Bob, you will have to bait for me; I don't think I could do that."

"I'll do it, sure. When are you coming?"

"I am going away Monday, and will not be back before Saturday. We can go some nice day the following week. I'll let you know at Sunday-school what day will suit, and you can tell these boys. We will meet here, if that pleases all of you."

They nodded assent.

She had looked towards the house several times during the conversation. She saw two untidy-looking girls and a woman peeping out at her.

"I think I'll run in and see your mother, boys. Get over here?" Suiting the action to the question, she was over the rail fence before one of them had recovered from the astonishment of her announcement.

The girls went out of sight; but Mrs. Ferguson met her at the door, with evident embarrassment.

"Good evening, Mrs. Ferguson. I am Eloise Carter. I was talking with the boys about their fish. I had no idea we had such nice ones so near us."

She had taken the proffered chair, which Mrs. Ferguson dusted with her apron.

"Yes'm, the boys are always fishin' or huntin'. I tell 'em they had better be doing something better. I get so tired out of fish, rabbit, and such like."

"They are good at either, then."

"Yes'm; mighty lucky, too. But it is all the same, Sunday or Monday. 'Pears to me they bring in the biggest lots for me to clean on Sundays."

"Do you never go to church?"

"No'm ; I ain't heard a sermon going on six years. Ferguson and the boys work so little, we are always behind hand getting clothes. I try to get the children's first, and then I am generally left out. I ain't had a thing fit to go to meetin' in ; I can't get the boys to go, and the girls can't go alone."

"If I were to send you some of my dresses, couldn't you make them over to fit the two girls I saw?"

"To be sure, I could, and thank you for them. I used to be handy with my needle, but since we moved here it seems everything has gone down hill, and I've lost heart. I wasn't raised so, but somehow I've fallen into the slipshod ways of Ferguson and the boys ; though I don't hold with their doing like they do on Sunday, Miss Carter ; I just can't help myself."

"We are all powerless to help ourselves often, Mrs. Ferguson ; but we have a Friend who will always lend a listening ear if we go to him with our cares. I hope you can do that."

"Not often. I tell you, I am all wrong and off the track. The preacher has been here and invited us to church. Somehow I couldn't talk to him like I have to you. I don't think a man can understand these things like a woman."

The poor woman felt a sense of relief. It had been so long since she had been able to pour her heart sorrows into so sympathetic an ear.

"I see father coming, and I must go ; but I hope to see you again soon. I have promised the boys—or

rather, they promised to let me go with them fishing some day soon. I am glad to have met you, and hope I may be of some service in helping you out of your difficulties soon. You tell me you are the only professed follower of the Lord in the family. Try to let your light so shine that your husband and boys may be induced to follow it."

"Lor', miss, it is such a poor one they couldn't take one step by it."

"It is your privilege to brighten it. I hope to see you soon. Good-bye."

The Ferguson boys were not in sight when she came out. Bob Sims, with a small split basket, came up to her and said :

"Miss Eloise, Aleck and Jack want you to have the fish for your breakfast, if you will take them."

"Certainly I will, and am much obliged to you all. I know I will enjoy them."

"Were you successful in getting the help you wanted, father?"

"Oh, yes. Tom was very glad to get the job. He had no work and was agreeably surprised to know my business. If I have enough timber I can keep him busy a month."

"How did you find the Fergusons? Pretty bad off, aren't they?"

"Yes, in many respects they are very poor."

"What have you in your basket?" he asked.

"Guess."

"Never could guess anything in my life; you know that."

"Fish. The boys gave me their catch."

"That was bad for them, I am afraid. I expect the woods and streams furnish the greater part of their food, from what Tom Hart told me. He says they are a shiftless set, from the father down."

"I have great sympathy for Mrs. Ferguson. She seems to have seen better days. Everything has gone down hill with them, till she hasn't the courage to even attempt to get up again."

She then told her father what Tommy Clark told her about them, and their influence over Bob Sims.

"It seemed really providential that I should have met them just as I did. If I had been a ghost, and dropped in their midst, they could not have been more startled than when I stepped out of the buggy. They had no idea of my stopping there. I found everything at loose ends, inside as well as out. I am going to try to help them to get on the up-grade again. I'll venture you would never guess, sure enough, what my first step is to be, so I'll tell you. I am going fishing with the boys."

"Well, I must say it looks very much like you would give the kick which is said to be given to those who have reached the level, that they may not rise again, instead of lending a helping hand."

"I admit that appearances are against me, but trust to my judgment, and wait and see."

At the supper-table she said to her aunt :

"Can you get me up a real nice lunch for a lot of hungry boys, the Monday after I get back home?"

"I guess I can."

"You cannot guess what wild goose chase she is on now," laughingly said her father.

"I supposed, as soon as she asked the question, that she wanted to give her boys a pic-nic. I thought I could have all that was necessary for them."

"No, I am going fishing with the Ferguson boys and Bob Sims, in Davis' mill pond. I went to see Mrs. Ferguson this afternoon. The boys gave me the fish I brought home. I want so much to help them to a better life. The boys fish and hunt on Sunday. I want to get my boys to work on them. The girls would be glad to go to Sunday-school, if their brothers would go with them. I felt ashamed of our neglect. They have lived there several months. I realize that I have lived very selfishly of late, and must try to make amends for it now. I promised to send her a package. I'll be glad for you to let John carry it as early as you can."

Mrs. Ferguson watched the phaeton till it was out of sight. She felt, as she turned to go in, that a ray of sunlight had penetrated her darkened home. She repeated softly to herself, "Let your light shine." Conscience asked, "Have you."

She was forced to admit that she had not. It is true she had little to encourage her, but she remem-

bered the command was not to let it shine when all was bright and sunny around you, for there would be less need. How much more was it needed when all within and without was dark and dreary? She mentally resolved to hide it no longer under a bushel, but to let it shine, if only it gave out the feeblest light.

She looked around and felt rebuked by the untidiness of everything about the house. She called the two girls to her and said :

“ See how nice and clean you can make everything in here, while I get supper. I was so ashamed that Miss Carter caught the house so dirty. It is too late now, but next week we will clean up generally.”

The two girls, aged thirteen and eleven, seemed to feel the comparison between their visitor and themselves, and in a way longed to look like her. They went to work earnestly, and by the time supper was ready they had quite transformed the appearance of the room.

Aleck noticed the change as soon as he entered.

“ Locked the stable door after the horse was stolen, didn’t you, ma?” he asked.

“ Yes. But I am going to keep cleaner. I want you to help me. You are the oldest, and the others will follow your example.”

“ Didn’t she look nice, though? She didn’t do like rich folks. Bob says her father is the richest man about here. She is his Sunday-school teacher. We were going down to Forbes’ to-morrow to get the

hound he promised us, but Bob says he ain't going, because he promised her to be at Sunday-school, and it will be too late then."

"My son, I wish you and Jack had the clothes and would go to church, too. I hate to see you roving about and doing things like you do. I admit it is part my fault, but I am going to try to do better."

Even this little open confession was a relief to her, and she felt like there was something brighter in store for her.

"She is coming to go fishing with us. She ain't one bit stuck up, is she?" Aleck asked.

"No, she ain't. She just sat on that old split-bottom chair like she was used to it. She didn't keep pulling up her skirts, as if the floor was dirty. She is a real lady, I know. When is she coming? Did she tell you?"

With the questions came the mental resolve that the house should be as clean as soap, water and sand could make it.

"She is going away Monday. She is going to tell Bob to-morrow. He says she'll come certain. She never fools anybody. If me and Jack could get some work we could buy some clothes and go to church, too."

Bright and early the next morning, Bob set out. He felt so important; Miss Eloise was to have a special message for him. He secretly hoped the other boys would get there in time to hear her tell him.

Eloise, too, was a little earlier than usual. She saw Bob as soon as she alighted from the carriage.

"Ah!" she thought, "Tom's prayer may be answered sooner than we expect."

She went towards him, and he seemed less shy than usual.

"Good morning, Bob. I am glad we are both so early. I haven't been down to the spring for a long time. I remember when I was a little girl the sight of the path made me thirsty. Let's go down and get a drink. Have you thought about our fishing excursion?"

"Yes'm, we talked about it after you were gone. Jack says he bets you fool us; that he knows rich folks like you ain't going to fish with the likes of us."

"What did you tell him?"

"I said you would, 'cept you was sick or dead, or it rained."

"Thank you, Bob, for defending me. I've arranged to come to-morrow week. That is a holiday, you know—the very day everybody goes fishing. I'll bring the lunch for all. We'll meet at Mr. Ferguson's—that is, if I am not sick or dead, or it doesn't rain. Do you think all of the class would like to join us?"

Bob almost felt himself grow. To be consulted by Miss Eloise Carter. Whew! It almost took his breath.

"Them boys? They'd be just as proud as me and Aleck and Jack."

"All right, then, we will ask them; and if you've had the measles, I'll get you to go and tell the Clarks about it."

Bob wondered how he came to have all these honors thrust upon him at once. He was delighted, when they came back, to see that almost all of the boys had come, and saw him walking with the teacher.

After exchanging salutations with them, she said :

"Boys, Bob and I have a scheme on hand, and want all of you who will join us to say 'Aye.'"

They responded in chorus.

"Going to trust us, are you? Well, it is this: Bob and I, and some other boys—"

They laughed outright at her mistake.

"What is it? What did I say wrong? Oh, I see. I thought I was a boy, too. Bob, some other boys and I are going fishing Whit Monday, and want you to join us. Bob will tell you all about it another time. It is time for the bell, and we will go in."

She found it a little hard to hold their attention. They were glad when the dismissal came, that they might find out all about it from Bob.

Before they went out, she told them about Tommy Clark's conversion, and suggested to them that they extend their prayers beyond their own class, to those who did not attend any school.

"Thereby we will get a two-fold blessing," she said; "one for our own obedience, and the other one that we've been instrumental in trying to influence others to lead better lives."

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. GRAY'S PROTEST.

TUESDAY afternoon, when Eloise and Jennie came in from a shopping excursion, they found several letters which had been forwarded to them.

They were silently busy for a while, when Eloise exclaimed :

“This is grand !”

“I thought that was the sentence passed on all of them. I did not know that any of his letters admitted comparison—all in the superlative degree,” said Jennie.

“Listen and hear what he says concerning you, and then an expression of opinion will be in order.”

She read that part of his letter which unfolded Mr. Young's plan for their trip. When she came to the part asking her to invite Miss Jennie Marvin to join their party, adding that his sister also would be one of the number, and Mr. Young for a greater part of the time, she rushed so Eloise and, holding out her arm, said to her :

“Pinch me ! Stick me with a pin ! Do anything to reveal my identity. I cannot believe it all. Surely, Rip Van Winkle was not more uncertain of his identity, when he crept down the mountain side, than I am at this moment. I do not believe it possible that I am about to realize my longed-for desire, and that has

been this very trip in June—bright, leafy June! Are you sure you have read it aright?"

"See for yourself," offering her the letter.

"No, I'll trust you, but it does seem almost too good to be true. I am so glad I took mother's advice and got the evening dress. I will have to add a dark, heavy one for the cool days in the mountains. I think it would be wise for each of us to get a good, stout pair of walking shoes."

"Yes, that will be necessary," Eloise replied. Though one of the special attractions of this resort, so highly recommended by Mr. Young, is its fine livery service. Yet there will be many excursions which we will prefer to make afoot."

They were kept busy all the week, but had so arranged that everything would be ready to be sent to them by the last of the following week.

Saturday, at noon, they reached home, feeling quite fatigued by their busy week.

Each household was pleased when told of the arrangements made. Mrs. Marvin was specially glad for Jennie to have an opportunity to make this visit in such congenial company.

There is another to be equally as much startled by this proposition as Jennie was.

Dr. Gray did not mention his plans in his own home till he had a reply from Eloise. While he had not a doubt as to her answer, yet he thought it wiser to wait till it came.

At the supper table, the same evening on which he received her letter, he said to Alice :

"Sister mine, how do you think you would enjoy a trip to Niagara and the Adirondacks?"

"More than anything else I can think of, except, perhaps, one to Europe. One seems as much a probability as the other. Why did you ask the question?"

"I hope the desire for the European tour may as easily be gratified as this one. I have decided to take you with us on our tour for the month."

Mrs. Gray's ideas of propriety were somewhat shocked, and she felt that she must express herself on the subject before the idea took firm hold on her daughter. She knew it would be a very great disappointment to her if her expectations could not be realized. So she said to her son :

"Charlie, have you thought advisedly on this matter? There are many ways of looking at it. Perhaps Miss Eloise would greatly prefer that the honeymoon should be spent without the third party."

Mrs. Gray was a lady of the old regime, who thought there should be a moral fitness in everything. She added :

"I know some ladies have very strict ideas on this subject, and I certainly would not be willing for Alice to intrude on her sense of propriety at all."

Poor Alice felt as if she was about to tumble from some lofty height. She was so delighted at the proposal, and in her imagination was already gazing on the beauties of Niagara.

"Oh, mamma, do not object! I am sure brother Charlie would not have asked me if it had not been proper."

"I can set that matter at rest at once. I have always thought that what she wrote to me was to be known only to myself. However, I'll let Alice read aloud what she says on this subject, and then you can judge for yourselves. I had thought all the time of taking Alice. When Fred was here he met Miss Jennie Marvin, and I think fell desperately in love with her. We were talking the matter over, and he proposed inviting her to join us, and he would spend a large part of the time with us, too. That made the way plain, and I at once wrote to Eloise about it. Here is her reply. You can read that much aloud."

"I am perfectly delighted at the proposition to take your sister and Jennie along. Jennie is perfectly wild at the idea. Says she cannot believe it true, and expresses a very sympathetic feeling for Rip Van Winkle when he was trying to settle himself. I am longing to know your people and love them all, but more especially your sister. I have always felt so poor in respect to relationship. I could never help feeling a little pang of jealousy when I see large happy families and realize that I never knew a brother's or sister's love. It has been different about my mother, of whom I have so indistinct a recollection. I have been brought up to feel that she was near me all the time. She is daily and hourly talked about. Her likes and dislikes are as

familiar to me as if I had them from her own lips. Aunt Lizzie and Mammy have been so true to the trust she gave them that I cannot feel her loss as I would under other circumstances. I know Mr. Young will enjoy the girls' society. He seemed to be quite a gallant. I am not at all given to match-making, but it seems to me the attraction was mutual when he and Jennie met. However, we will have to await further developments. Do you not think so?"

"I am sure, mamma, you could not wish a more cordial acquiescence than that; I, for my part, am perfectly satisfied. I shall try to give her all the sisterly affection she is pining for," Alice said.

"Yes, daughter, I like the tone of the letter very much, and, having heard so much of her many amiable qualities, I am sure we will all love her. I am glad to have you with us for an evening, Charlie, and hope we will have no interruptions. I have seen so little of you of late that I am quite in the dark as to your arrangements. I am sorry that your father had the engagement with his friends to-night. I would have been glad to have had him with us. I do not think he will object to Alice joining the party. I will have to know at once, though, so as to make the necessary preparations for such an extended tour. Now I want to know your plans, if you have settled them definitely. Will you board at the hotel or bring your bride to live with us?"

"I think I know enough to say that we will do

neither. Colonel Carter is anxious to give her a nicely furnished house as a bridal present. But he wishes that kept a profound secret. That is why I have not mentioned it to you earlier.

He is negotiating with a party for one now; but there is some trouble as to the title, and he has a lawyer looking into the matter. He is waiting to see if it can be settled satisfactorily. It is 618 —— street."

"Oh, what a lovely home that will be, brother! And so near us, too. That will be perfectly splendid."

"I think the title is all right, and there will be no trouble about procuring it. He thinks the month that we are away will be sufficient for the furnishing, and he intends to ask your assistance in that. I have often wished for that house. I felt real queer when he told of his intention. He asked if it was in an eligible neighborhood, and how it would suit my convenience?"

Nothing could have been more pleasing to Mrs. Gray than to be selected to assist in furnishing the house. She had exquisite taste, and had often wished to have the money to gratify it.

"Another question, my son. At what hour will the marriage take place? Will it be a church or home wedding? Of course you expect to take our own minister with you to perform the ceremony."

"One at a time, please. It will take place at eleven o'clock, June tenth, in the parlors at Sunnymeade. A lunch will be served immediately after, and we will catch the train which passes the station at 3:30 in the

afternoon. We will reach Norfolk at seven o'clock next morning, in time to go aboard the New York steamer. We will get breakfast on the steamer. I had never thought of asking Dr. Allison to perform the ceremony. Of course, there will be an invitation sent to him and his family.

"Eloise is a Baptist, 'dipped and dyed in the wool.' Her pastor, Dr. Gordon, has served the church for almost a half century. He, I am sure, baptized her mother. I know he officiated at their marriage, and also at her funeral. It would almost break her heart for any one else to be asked. He is a grand man, and has grown old more gracefully than any one I ever saw. He enters into all the work and plans of the church as heartily as any man of thirty would do."

"Surely she will not join this Baptist Church here? Does she know how very plain the members are? You must certainly tell her candidly about them. She would never forgive you if you allow her to cast her lot with that set. There is not a single family in the church, as far as I know, who goes at all into society. Of course, if she goes there some of them will call on her and she will have to return the calls, or she will be considered proud. To prevent anything of the kind, it would be much wiser for you to get a pew in our own church, and tell her that you prefer that she should go with you."

"Go with me, did you say? I haven't heard a sermon, except those I heard Dr. Gordon preach, since I

came from Germany. I am sure I will not be expected to go now. I can easily get out of it by attending to my practice at that hour. Etiquette will demand two or three times to any church of her selection. After that, well—”

“In that case, my son, I see the greater need for arranging for her to attend with us. You certainly will not want to turn her, a stranger in the city, loose with all of those poor folks in that church.”

“Between us, the poorer they are and the more they need help, the better she will like them, I think. I will not interfere with her religion, and I hope she will not with mine—that is, with the lack of it.”

A ring at the door-bell meant an urgent call to a child with convulsions. That settled the family conclave for that night.

It was well for the two who had spent so many wakeful hours on this subject of late that they were not allowed to listen to that and the subsequent conversation in this fashion-loving home. Neither would have enjoyed the tranquil night's rest which they did.

“I am surprised at your brother, Alice. The idea of his not interfering in such a serious matter. I know he has taken very little interest in the church since he came home. But I certainly thought he would show some spirit and pride in having his wife go in the best society. That she certainly will not find in the Baptist church here. I wonder how he would feel to see her going around with the laboring class of people ;

for instance, with those Smiths, who live near your Aunt Laura's, or Policeman Scott's daughters. I do not believe he has ever given it a serious thought."

"Mother, I think you look at it too seriously. I see no use of taking that gloomy view of the matter. You seem to forget that one of the things we Americans take most pride in is our religious liberty. While I personally know very few who belong to the Baptist church, those I know very favorably. If all of them are as intelligent as the Scott girls, they have no cause to be ashamed. Annie was always at the head of her class at school, and it is said Emma has a magnificent voice. I heard some one say she had gone to the Boston Conservatory to complete the course in music."

"That may be true, yet I cannot think your brother would willingly allow her to associate with them," she replied.

"My opinion is that Mrs. Dr. Charles Gray will think and act to suit herself, in spite of the entire Gray family, and that Dr. Charles Gray will insist that she be allowed to do it. I am sure this member of the family will certainly not dare to molest nor make her afraid," Alice quietly responded.

"I guess, then, that this is as favorable an opportunity as I may have to enter my protest against your going around visiting any of them with her. As a matter of course, you will be expected to return with her all calls from our set; but beyond that I draw a line. They—I mean those Baptists—are a pushing

set. Our seamstress belongs there. What do you suppose she said to me the other day?"

"I can't imagine."

"‘Mrs. Gray, come around some time and hear our new pastor. I am sure you will be pleased with him. They say he is decidedly the best preacher in the city.’ I thanked her, but could but wonder who expressed such an opinion of him."

"It seems to me we ought to be glad to have brother in any church. I feel like he is fast drifting into some of the ‘isms’ that we would not wish to have him do."

"I certainly want him in the church, but not the Baptist, if you please," she replied.

Visitors are announced, and the conversation is necessarily ended.

If they could join the party and go to Davis' mill pond the following Monday, poor Mrs. Gray would be almost ready to forbid the banns. She would feel that her son was to get almost a plebeian wife—not one to be any credit to him in society.

CHAPTER VIII.

FISHING IN DAVIS' MILL POND.

MONDAY dawned bright and clear, to the great delight of the Ferguson boys and ten others.

It had been arranged that they should meet as early as eight o'clock and get the bait ready and cut out some of the weeds on the margin of the pond.

Mrs. Ferguson had veritably swept and garnished her house. It was scrupulously clean, though sparsely furnished.

The boys had brought in some beautiful wild flowers. An old stone crock and a broken pitcher had been utilized as vases. The boys had whitened the hearth with fuller's clay, also the jamb. The flowers in the improvised vases, and around them a bank of moss and maiden-hair fern, made a beautiful picture against the white background.

They had found a patch of wild strawberries and had gathered them. They were anxious for a way to serve them. Aleck asked his mother if she had enough saucers she could lend them. She had them, but it was such a dilapidated, odd lot she was ashamed for them to be seen. She said :

"This is a kind of pic-nic, and nobody eats out of dishes at pic-nics. The best thing is to get some real pretty, smooth leaves and make little baskets. I used

to do that when I was a little girl, and they taste lots better out of them than they would out of china dishes."

It struck them as the proper thing to do.

Aleck had real taste, if there had ever been any chance to develop it. Very soon he had arranged enough baskets to serve the party.

How eagerly they watched the clock. First one and then another would go to the door to see if they were yet in sight.

At last Jack said :

"Here they come. No, it is only a wagon, but it is full of people. She will come in a carriage."

Pretty soon they recognized her. The wagon was full, indeed. She had brought some girls along, and called by for the Clark boys, who were well enough to come.

"Well, boys, here we are. Had you given us out? I waited just a little while at Mr. Clark's. I am glad to see that you are all here. Have you found a good place to lay the cloth for the lunch?" she asked.

"Yes'm," said Bob ; down there by the mint spring. It is so shady and cool there."

"If it will be safe to put the hampers there now, let John drive down and deposit them. He is going to unhitch the horses and leave them till he comes back for us. He wants a little holiday, too. I guess we will not catch all the fish in the pond before he gets back. I forgot to tell you, Aleck, how much I enjoyed your nice perch for breakfast. I'll go in and speak to your mother a moment, and then we will go."

She was surprised and delighted at the changed appearance of the room. The little girls were both presentable this time. She noticed that their calico dresses were clean and neatly made.

"What a lovely, artistic fireplace you have, Mrs. Ferguson! This is the first hawthorn I've seen. And what lovely ferns! Did they grow near here? The arrangement of your flowers would suggest that you have an artist in the family."

"Yes'm; there is no end to the wild flowers on this place. The blooms are fine this year. My old man says it is a sign of a good crop year. Aleck fixed up the fireplace. He is right smart at anything like that. If he would only take some schooling, he would learn lots about flowers."

"He certainly ought to cultivate such taste as that," said Eloise. "I will talk to him about it."

"I do wish you would, Miss Eloise. It will do good, I am sure. They have got a notion of sprucing up since you were here. I hope now they will go to work and get them some clothes to wear to church."

"Aren't you and the girls coming with us? I said there was to be no dinner prepared by the mothers to-day," Eloise said to her.

"Yes'm, we will come after a little while."

Soon they were all busy with rod and line. Such talking and chattering! Aleck said:

"Miss Eloise, the fish ain't going to bite in all this noise. They'll have to be still, if you catch anything."

Soon the corks began to bob, and one or two fine perch were caught.

"By way of encouragement to persevere," said Jennie, who had come along to help entertain the boys.

It was a source of great amusement to the boys when she, with a great effort, drew up her line, to see dangling to it a large eel.

"Take the thing!" she screamed out. "I feel as if I had a snake. I have always thought they were cousins."

"He is a beauty, Miss Jennie," said one of the boys, as he took him from the hook.

"Ugh! It gives me the shivers to look at him," she replied.

The sun began to get warm, and one by one the rods were put aside, and each went nearer the spring and the hampers of lunch. Eloise followed. Glancing up the hill, she saw a pretty, mossy place. She said:

"All who want to hear some real funny tales, just go up there and sit down with Miss Jennie. She is a marvellous story-teller, and will entertain you till Mrs. Ferguson and I arrange for the lunch."

Away they scampered, and from the loud laughing and clapping of hands, she was a successful as well as marvellous story-teller.

They spread the cloths, and soon a bountiful repast was displayed. Mrs. Ferguson spoke to Aleck, and he went in the direction of home. He was soon back with his strawberries, which he had put in the box at the

spring to keep cool. He put the little baskets all around the table.

"My, what a surprise!" said Eloise. "I didn't know they were ripe yet."

"No more did I till yesterday. I was walking over the hill, and kept smelling something so good, it made me hungry. I went on further, and I found this patch, just spoiling for somebody to eat them. I had pulled about a dozen when I thought of saving 'em for to-day. I asked ma if they would be good. She said, 'First rate.' Me and Jack got up by time 'twas good daylight and got 'em."

"I will certainly enjoy them. I prefer the flavor to cultivated ones. The wild ones are generally sweet and juicy."

"I do, too, Miss Eloise," said Mrs. Ferguson. "I like to pick them out of the patch and eat them. Anything else I can do now?"

"Yes; open those tin buckets and fill them out of the spring."

"Whew! Ma, just look! No longer than yesterday you was wishin' you had some lemonade, and here it is," Aleck said.

"Didn't the ice keep well? Aunt Lizzie said she thought it would, if covered over with the lemons and sugar. There are the tin cups. I thought of this while I was in Richmond, and was sure it would be a treat. I must look after the Clarks; I do not want them to get sick. I'll go and call the children."

She found them very much interested in Jennie's story, and joined in the hand-clapping and hurrahs when it was over.

"Now I'll tell you one much more interesting than that one," said Eloise. "Once upon a time two ladies spread two cloths on a green, grassy spot, by a cool spring; then they opened two hampers and put the contents on the two cloths; then they opened two buckets and—and what next? Everybody who wants to eat from the two cloths and drink from the two buckets must do—as I do."

Suiting the action to her words, she ran as fast as she could down the hill, pursued by a hungry little crowd, who would do full justice to the dinner.

"Hold on, boys," said Gordon Glenn. "We did not applaud Miss Eloise's story—and, with due respect to Miss Jennie, I think hers was the best. Three cheers for her."

You may rest assured, they were given with a will.

No dinner served on the finest of china, glass or silver could have been more enjoyed than this one.

Mrs. Ferguson got rid of her tired look, and entered into the children's pleasure and amusement as she had not done for years.

There was a superabundance of everything. Eloise insisted that Mrs. Ferguson take the "fragments"—as she termed what was left—home for her supper, and thus be saved the trouble of preparing that meal.

"Now, children," she said, "I want to express my

pleasure at being with you to-day. I am sure we have all enjoyed it. While we sat by the pond and fished, I was reminded of that story of the fishermen in the Bible. You remember, as Christ walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two men fishing. He called them and said, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' From that day to this he has wanted us all to be 'fishers of men.' Some of you are young and inexperienced, and can do but little towards fishing for men; yet there is always something that we can do, and none of us must despise the day of small things. I hope to greet you all at Sunday-school. Perhaps Mrs. Ferguson may not be able to come, but the others can."

"I would like the best in the world to go, if I could. I'll do all I can to get the children off. I must thank you for myself and the children for this day. You have made it brighter for us, and I hope you will get your reward," she said.

"I feel equally indebted to you for your kindness and hearty coöperation in carrying out my plans. I must speak to Aleck before I go. Oh, here he is! I want you to come to Sunnymeade one day this week. I want to get you to decorate for me. Since I have seen the taste you displayed at home, I do not think it will be necessary to get any one from the city, as I had intended to do. I think you can do it. Come, and we will talk about it."

"I'll come," he said.

"I see John is ready, and we will go. I'll say

good-bye to each, with the hope of many more happy days like this."

The children watched them out of sight. Such pleasant things each one had to say of her!

Several of the boys invited the Fergusons to join their class.

Mrs. Ferguson said she would certainly get some of them ready. She belonged to that class of women who had seen better days, and when reverses came was unable to buffet the tide, and drifted with the current of hopelessness, forgetting to trust the only help she could have. There was something in the kind, affable manner of this young woman which had quite won her heart. She had learned to look with suspicion on the rich, and felt there was always some selfish motive beneath everything they did. There must be some way, she thought, to use the poor to put more money into their pockets. She could see no reason to distrust this act of Eloise. She fully realized that in no way could she get benefit from them. Only a desire to do them good seemed plain to her.

She saw her error, and determined by God's help to make an effort to lead her children to a better life. She had never reached that point where her conscience approved of the way she was living.

When she went home she looked critically at the fireplace decorations, and wondered why her motherly intuition had not enabled her to see that Aleck had talent in that direction before. She remembered now

how fond he was of the very first flowers that came in spring. He would have a cup or glass filled often with the lovely trailing arbutus when she had not thought the snows were over. Again he would come in with "Jack-in-the-pulpit" or "lady's slipper," and point out beauties which she could not see, for her vision was filled with what seemed much more important than wild flowers, which could not in any way help her.

The neglected housework was a rebuke to her. She began to catechise herself. She saw things differently now. Before, she felt that her husband's shiftless ways were entirely responsible for the boys' lack of energy. She could but wonder now why she had not taken any of the blame to herself.

She sent Aleck to the store with a few dozen eggs and exchanged them for spool cotton, buttons and needles. She gave all of the clothing an overhauling, and was surprised to find that some of the garments which she had cast aside as too far gone for repairs could, by a little ingenuity, be used.

It seemed to be a thinking family, as no comments were made. She noticed that the boys were more careful to clean their feet at the door; even her husband spat less often on the whitened hearth. The boys wondered why she had not always kept the floor so clean as she did now. The two girls used much more soap and water than they did, and their mother, with the extra work, found time to plait their hair for them every day.

Altogether it was a much improved house.

Aleck was anxious for his mother to get ready for him to make the trip to Sunnymead. He asked her every day how long it would be. Much to his satisfaction, she announced one bright morning that she had ironed his best shirt and so altered an old alpaca coat of his father's that he could go that day. He started pretty early, but not before his mother had given him many admonitions as to what to say and how to act.

"Take off your hat when you go in, and don't forget to say 'yes, ma'am' and 'no, ma'am,'" was her parting injunction.

As he neared the house his knees began to quake. When he saw Colonel Carter seated on the front porch he almost wished he could go in an opposite direction. He went up to him, but what to say or what to do with his hands or hat he couldn't think. He knew his mother told him something.

"Good morning, my boy," said the Colonel.

"I am well, I thank you, ma'am."

He knew he had not said the proper thing, and his embarrassment increased. Colonel Carter saw it, and said:

"What can I do for you, young man?"

"Nothin', sir. Miss Eloise told me to come," he said.

"Yes, yes, that is all right. She will be here in a little while. Just take a seat. You are Mr. Ferguson's son, I believe?"

Aleck felt that his wits were returning, and he was able to give intelligible answers to the questions put to him.

By the time Eloise put in an appearance he began to feel at ease. But when she asked him into the house, he hardly knew how to act. Remembering that his hat was to be looked after when he went in, he put it behind the front door, without once thinking of hanging it on the rack.

"Just sit here, Aleck," drawing a chair near to hers. "I want to consult you about arranging these fire-places for me. I am to be married in two weeks, and I want these rooms tastefully arranged. These very large fire-places had given me right much trouble till I saw how you had arranged your mother's. I knew if I could get your help that I saw my way out of the trouble."

"Yes'm, that I will, and anything else for you."

"You know where ferns are plentiful, do you?"

"Yes'm ; there are thousands of 'em in the edge of the woods close by where we eat our dinner. I never did see such big ones in my life. They come right up out of the moss—so thick you can hardly get 'em without the moss, too."

"So much the better. I thought it looked like a pretty green carpet. I want three filled. You can find the prettiest ones, and father will send the wagon for them. I will have some blooming plants to put with them."

"Lor', Miss, the woods will be full by that time, and it 'pears to mix them with the moss and ferns would look nicer. I don't know, though, 'cause I never seen any fixed. Don't folks have white flowers for weddins?"

"Certainly."

"Thunderwood will be all bloomin' by that time."

He seemed in his enthusiasm to loose all of his embarrassment. Going to the hearth, he said :

"I tell you what will look nice. There is a lot of Johnny-jump-ups this year—the biggest ones I ever saw. Mix them all along in the moss, right around on the edge of the hearth ; then a bank of ferns ; then another row raised up on a plank or somethin', and fill up the rest with them thunderwood blooms, will be pretty."

"I like your idea, but do not know the thunderwood by that name. How does it look?"

"It is a white, fringy-looking flower. I'll bring you some if I can find a bit out by Sunday. Ma is tryin' to get us ready. It ain't but two miles straight though the woods to your church."

"I am glad to hear that," she said. "I am sure a boy who is as fond of nature as you are will love to learn of Nature's God. There are several things here that I wish your mother had. I am sure she could utilize them to advantage. If you think she would not be angry, and you are willing to carry them, I'll send her a package now, and another by the first passing. I

may come myself. I want some sewing done, if she has time."

"No'm, she won't get mad. She's taken a mighty notion to fix up. Instead of buyin' sugar and coffee with her aigs, she got buttons, needles and thread, and she's sewed a heap this week."

She went up-stairs and got several pairs of pants, a vest or two, and several other things, and put them in a basket.

She talked to Aleck a while on various subjects. She showed him her pictures and flowers, for she had seen that his talent was for something in that line. She felt that for him to spend his time as a day laborer on a farm was like "casting pearls before swine." But she saw no prospect for aught else, now; though she secretly resolved to keep him in mind, and, if possible, find a way for him to cultivate the talent with which God had endowed him.

He started home, filled with delight at having some part to do for the grand wedding. He wondered if he would be allowed to see it.

The basket was thankfully received, and Mrs. Ferguson saw that both of the boys, with a little extra effort on her part, could have a decent pair of pants for Sunday. She went to work with a will, and was so far successful that Eloise could scarcely believe her own eyes when she showed them to her.

She and Miss Lizzie drove down Saturday afternoon with a package of dresses, curtains and other things

that had done good service at their home, but were yet too good to throw aside.

While in Richmond she bought Aunt Hannah a new dress, which she wished to have made for her to wear at the wedding. She remembered that Mrs. Ferguson told her she used to be handy with her needle, and when Aleck told her of exchanging the 'aigs' for sewing material, instead of sugar and coffee, she well knew it meant privation.

She carried the material for the dress to get her to make it, so that she might have some ready cash to help her fix up the things she had sent her.

Both of the visitors were agreeably surprised to find the house so tidy.

Mrs. Ferguson told them of her success in making over the garments. She thought all of the children would be able to go to Sunday-school, and she hoped to get to church very soon herself.

Aleck was not in the house, but just as they were about to leave he came in with a bunch of the thunder-wood bloom, which he had been out to hunt.

"If you ain't too tired, Miss Eloise, I'll show you them Johnny-jump-ups I was tellin' you about. It ain't far."

"All right, I'll go."

It did indeed seem like a beautiful green and purple carpet, so thickly were they scattered over the moss.

"Now you see I can just cut 'em out deep, and the moss soaks up so much water you can make it real wet,

and they'll keep on bloomin'. They ain't bloomin' real good yet, but there'll be thousands by two weeks."

They parted, to meet the next morning.

The children were there early. At first they seemed a little shy and out of place, but the feeling soon wore off and they enjoyed the novelty of the situation.

Eloise took the two boys in her own class, as she was anxious to have them under the influence of her band.

She and the superintendent had a private talk between the close of the school and the church service. She felt so anxious as to the one who was to be her successor. This had been a serious consideration. They were bright boys, and she was afraid of the influence from without, if there was not one to be extremely watchful.

She wished so much that Gordon Glenn could take them. She suggested to the superintendent that he make him an assistant, to look after those who were irregular. It was so decided, and the appointment of a teacher was postponed till the following Sunday. In the meantime he would call at Sunnymeade, and they would carefully consider the question, and visit the one selected.

As the time approached for her to give up her work, she felt more sad than she imagined it possible.

She had not told them of it as yet, but intended to do so the next Sunday, and invite them all to be present at the marriage.

CHAPTER IX.

WEDDING BELLS.

ACCORDING to promise, Mr. Lipscombe came. After a very careful consideration of the subject, they decided that Miss Mary Bruce would be the most suitable person to take the class, with Gordon to assist.

Eloise promised to see her and gain her consent to the plan. She felt that she would like to tell her about the needs of each.

She felt very hopeful of Bob Sims now. Since the Fergusons had become interested, they would not prove the hindrance she had feared. But she felt that much depended on keeping an eye on them and not allowing them to lose their interest at all.

She asked her father to drive her over to Mr. Bruce's the next morning. They made an early start, in order to go by the postoffice to mail some letters.

Whom should she see, when they drove up at the postoffice, but Gordon Glenn. He was about to start for home when he saw them coming. He recognized them and waited to speak.

"I am so glad to meet you, Gordon. I was just wishing to see you."

While her father went in for the mail she unfolded her plan to him.

"I am as willing as I can be to do all I can, but I feel afraid I am not capable."

"I think you are. You are much more advanced in your studies than any of them, and you are always prepared with your lesson. I do not think much of the teaching will devolve on you. Your part will be mainly to look after the absentees and try to keep them interested in the school. I hope you'll have but little trouble in that direction now. It seems that the Ferguson boys have come to stay. But it is very hard for any of us to break old habits. They may need help along that line. I want you to write to me and let me know how you all get on. You can let me know of any particular case that you think a word from me would help, and I'll do all I can. Of course, from time to time I'll be with you, and will always feel an abiding interest in each of you."

"Thank you, Miss Eloise; I am sure you'll have the very best wishes of each one of us. Good-bye."

They found Miss Mary at home. She did not at first feel that she could take the class. She said:

"There'll be a great difference in my present class and yours. I am afraid we'll both be too prone to compare. They are so very much attached to you, and I've had no experience with boys. Mine have all been small girls. Somehow I think they are much more easily managed than boys."

"You were never more mistaken. Those boys are very lovable. They can be led by gentle means to do

almost anything. With four exceptions, they are Christians, and of those I am very hopeful. The new additions, Aleck and Jack Ferguson, may need help; but I've formed a most favorable opinion of them, especially Aleck. I think he is a boy of considerable promise, if only the right means could be used to develop him."

It was agreed that she would try it, though with many misgivings. She said:

"I am afraid to slip into your shoes, Miss Eloise. I have my doubts about the fit."

As she and her father started, she said:

"This is settled now, and I've nothing more to do in a business way. So I'll just make the most of my last days at dear old Sunnymeade."

"Not last, daughter. You are not giving us up—only taking another into the family. This is always to be home above all others."

"Do you know, father, I've been wondering if I'll ever be as happy anywhere else as I've been here. I do not suppose there is another girl of my age who has seen so little sorrow as I have. Will those with whom I am to be thrown now make the excuses for my shortcomings that you and Aunt Lizzie do?"

"Of course, daughter, no one will see you with our eyes. To your husband I do not doubt you'll be 'the fairest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely.' I've long since come to the conclusion that happiness and love are not to be compared. I mean this, that

there is a difference in the object of love, and consequently a difference in the love. But the two do not admit of comparison in the natural sense. For instance, my love for you and for your mother, I could never compare in intensity. They were entirely different. I could not have loved her more as my wife than I did. Nor has any man loved his child more than you are loved. Yet the two loves could not be compared. So with your happiness. In your new relation it will be of a different nature; and you cannot compare the happiness of the home and love where you will reign as wife to the one in which you were the child."

"That is so, father. I am glad you explained it in that way. I've thought a great deal about it."

Truly did she make the most of these last days. The lunch which was to be served to the guests did not trouble her; she knew that there would be nothing lacking there. The trousseau was complete. The trunk which she would take with her was almost ready. She paid visits to all the neighbors, to every haunt about the place which had been dear to her as a child.

Time sped on its swiftest wings, it seemed to the entire household. Only two days more, and they such busy days!

Monday afternoon found Aleck in place with his mosses, ferns and Johnny-jump-ups. They were put into the coolest place, and a bountiful supply of water given them. He promised to be on hand bright and

early the next morning. In his selection he seemed to have known just where this drooping spray would suit, or that tall and stately cluster show to the best advantage.

Eloise was more than ever impressed with his taste.

Jennie Marvin had charge of the decorations. She did not feel so confident as Eloise that Aleck knew just what he was doing; however, she stood aloof while he arranged the hearth in the dining-room. She did not make a single suggestion. Every few minutes he would step back and view his work from different stand-points; then one spray would be turned a little to the left, another to the right, or some other little change.

Jennie saw no improvements to suggest. She went out on the porch, where her mother and several other friends were with Miss Lizzie and Colonel Carter.

"I just tell you, friends and fellow-citizens, I am the fifth wheel in this decoration wagon. That boy was born for such work. Who would have thought of it, except Eloise? Did any of you ever happen to meet *Pere* Ferguson in the road? He hardly looks as if he had gumption enough to tell a rosebud from a cow; yet this offspring of such a sire puts to the blush some of the decorators of the cities."

All went in to see how he was progressing, and were as much pleased as Jennie.

That afternoon a number of invited guests arrived.

Dr. Gray had come a few days before, and he and Colonel Carter had gone to the courthouse and obtained

the license and arranged everything, so that he would not come back till the morning of the marriage.

About an hour before the appointed time it was announced "they are coming." From the windows were seen a dozen or more carriages coming down the long lane leading to the house. Already numbers of carriages and buggies bearing the neighbors from miles around had arrived.

All of the boys of Eloise's Sunday-school class had arrived—each one so much afraid he would be late.

Jennie, standing so as to be out of sight of the arrivals, but able to see them as they alighted, announced them thus :

"No further uneasiness on your part, Eloise ; the Doctor didn't forget to come. The very first man to alight.

"Mr. Young !"

If there was an extra pulsation of the heart no one was aware of it.

"There is Papa Gray, a stately old gentleman ; Ma Gray, quite stylish ; Sister Alice, real sweet ; brother, sisters, cousins and the aunts—I couldn't see all at once, so they got by me."

Mrs. Marvin was assisting Miss Lizzie to receive the guests.

It was arranged that Alice Gray would be brought to Eloise's room, as she was to be a maid of honor, and would have to dress. Mrs. Marvin came with her and introduced her. She met Eloise as if they had been bosom friends all their lives.

"I am glad to know you, Eloise. I've loved you almost as long as Brother Charlie has."

"I am equally glad to know you, and so glad to have a sister."

"Here, you two will have a whole month to make love in. Miss Alice must make her toilet. The Doctor will be in such a hurry he'll not wait."

The three chattered like so many magpies, and by the time Alice was dressed they were fully acquainted.

"I declare, Eloise, I would hate to leave this lovely home, if I were you. Brother Charlie always said it was an ideal country place, but we knew that everything was looked at here through one pair of spectacles and we knew the glamour of those."

Soon the solemn words were said by the hoary-headed man of God which linked two lives in one, for weal or woe.

Congratulations and introductions filled the time till the lunch was announced.

Reader, did you ever go to a genuine country wedding? If not, you've missed lots—of something good to eat. The quantity and quality of the dishes at one of them would supply a dozen spreads to the same number of guests in some fashionable city. Everybody seemed to enjoy it to the full.

The travelers repaired to their rooms and changed their apparel and made ready for the journey.

It was a gay cavalcade that passed out from Sunny-meade on its way to the station. They were literally

showered with rice and good wishes. The train sped its way towards the sea, and the others to their respective homes.

We will join some of the homeward-bound ones first, as they comment on the events of the day.

"I must say, Janet, I think our son has made a very wise choice of a wife. I am quite prepared to take her to our hearts and home."

"Yes, she seems to be quite a sweet girl. I only wish we were to have her in our home for a time, at least. If we could only bring some influence to bear on her as to her church relations! Charlie seems to think we would have a hopeless task to turn her; in fact, he as much as said he would not interfere in any way. Of course, if she goes with the class of people in her church, she will not be taken up by those of our set. There is certainly no affinity between them. If, however, they had come to live with us for a while, by degrees we could have doubtless gotten her to come with us; as it is, she'll not be under our influence. I've talked with Alice and warned her sufficiently, I think, about her associating with those Eloise may take up with. I've seen real trouble about it. I did my duty as far as I could in the matter. I urged Charlie to rent a pew in our church, and tell her his preference in the matter."

"I do not look at it in the same light, Janet. I think that is something we ought to settle individually. If that is her only fault, we'll not quarrel about it," her husband replied.

"A man never looks at such things in the right light. The first thing you know she'll want to persuade Charlie to her way of thinking. How would you like to see him mixing up with the plain people in that Baptist church?"

His mind went back, while she talked, to some of those plain people's ancestors he had known in his childhood, in his country home. He remembered they were counted as the "salt of the earth." They were known far and near for their integrity and strict adherence to principle. He had not mixed much with these, but what he had known of them was most favorable. He knew if he fully expressed his mind on the subject his wife would feel quite outraged. He replied :

"I am afraid Charlie gives very few serious thoughts to religion. I've sometimes thought we were probably wrong to gratify his wish to go to Europe. I've often heard that many students there are led to doubt God. I think he has shown but little interest in church affairs since his return. If his wife can awaken that interest, I feel that we ought to rejoice at it."

"I assure you right now I should be very much displeased to see a child of mine leave the mother church for a dissenting one," replied Mrs. Gray.

Her husband could not refrain from a smile as he said :

"I fear, my dear, that you'll have to take some lessons in church history from that daughter-in-law of

yours. I venture she would tell you pretty quickly that the Baptists were not dissenters. I expect she is pretty well up in her denominational affairs. She comes from intelligent stock on both sides of the house, and I know that both families are quite prominent in the denomination."

"I wish with all my heart she would come with us. I am afraid, from several things I saw and heard to-day, that she'll care but little for gay society. I happened to be near when the minister bade her good-bye," said Mrs. Gray. "He urged her to go at once into the work of the church there. 'I'll write,' said he, 'before you get there, to Brother Elliott, the pastor. I'll tell him to find work for you at once. I'll see that a letter is granted you at our next church meeting. You will feel more at home there. I've talked to my flock so much about idleness in the Master's work, that I am sure you will never be an idler.' Now I am sure you'll admit that he was meddling. She doesn't belong to his church any more, and he ought to allow her to do to suit herself."

"Well, well, we will not meddle, either," said Mr. Gray.

"Another thing I overheard," she added, "was the parting injunction of that old colored woman to Charlie. I think he was somewhat to blame for it. She was on the back porch crying. He went out and said to her: 'Mammy, of course you'll give your parting blessing, and wish us all the joy in the world.' 'Yes,

sir,' she said, 'I do ; but you've taken the light out of this house to-day, and I'm bound to tell you that you mustn't do nothing to make her heart ache. Me and Mars John and Miss Lizzie has made it our business for seventeen long years to keep her from seein' trouble. Now, if she sees it, you is 'sponsible for it. I'm mighty feerd you ain't a Christian, Doctor, and if you ain't, she'll see trouble.' He, in the most familiar way, said : 'Now, Mammy, you needn't see trouble about her ; not a sorrow shall darken her heart if I can prevent it.' "

For fear she would keep up the subject, he called her attention to the house they were just passing, and asked her opinion of it.

She saw many attractions about it, but added :

"I prefer a city life to one in the country, though the Carters' home was certainly as elegant as any I ever knew."

Various comments were made by those in the other carriages. Mrs. Gray's sister said to her husband :

"I am anxious to hear sister Janet's opinions of to-day. I know she fairly reveled in the display of comfort and luxury to which her daughter has been raised. At the same time, I venture she was disappointed at the plainness and brevity of the marriage ceremony. She was anxious to have Dr. Allison go to marry them, but Charlie said he wouldn't think of proposing it. I suppose Charlie thought that as she was to hold the strings of the larger purse, he could afford to acquiesce in any of her plans."

"You are a mercenary creature, Alice," said her husband. "I, for my part, think he has drawn a prize in the lottery of life, if she hadn't a dime. I heard so many complimentary things said of her to-day. There were several boys grouped together after the lunch talking about her. One said, 'I tell you, boys, we'll miss her most as bad as the Colonel.' One, whom the other addressed as Gordon, said: 'The very best way to show how much we thought of her and how much we miss her, is to remember what she would like for us to do. She has told us just how to live, and to make the most of our opportunities.' I thought that was fine praise coming from a lot of boys."

"I only hope," said his wife, "she'll not be one of the 'goody-good sort' that we find in Sunday-school books. If so, she'll be such a disappointment to sister Janet. I think she would like to have her take a prominent place in society, which, of course, she could do, as she'll have quite a sum to spend if she chooses. Weren't you rather surprised at the bridal present from her father?" she asked.

"I didn't see it; or, if I did, I do not remember it," was the reply.

"A check for only five hundred dollars! I saw him endorse it and hand it to her, and she put it in her purse. 'I'll take it along, but do not think I'll have any need for it,' she said to him. I thought it looked like a paltry sum."

"At least it was genuine," he said. "I've known of

instances where checks were numbered among the bridal presents, and were not worth the paper they were written on."

With the younger people of the party there was but one sentiment. They were charmed with the bride, and would gladly welcome her to their homes. They saw nothing but fairest prospects ahead of them. It was hard for some of them not to feel a little tinge of envy when they saw on every side the many evidences of the lavish prosperity in which she had been brought up.

CHAPTER X.

THE BRIDAL PARTY ON THE WING.

NOT very long after leaving the station, Dr. Gray opened his traveling bag and took therefrom a drinking cup and a small box of powders.

"What on earth do you intend to do, Doctor? Certainly not to practice on this party," said Jennie. "I never saw a healthier set. You'll not forget all you know of medicine in this one month."

"I expect to give a dose all around. I may give two to the one who makes least fuss over the first one—by way of reward, you know," laughingly said the Doctor.

"'Age before beauty,' Miss Jennie; you may take the first one."

"Excuse me on that point, if you please. Mrs. Gray is my senior by one month and five days. She always insisted on claiming the five days before we reached our teens. After that she seemed willing for me to have them."

"Laying all jokes aside, Miss Jennie, I want each one of you to take one of these now, and one about an hour before we go aboard. It is the finest remedy I ever saw tried. You will be glad of it when you can stand upon your feet and observe your fellow-travelers

'casting up accounts' to-morrow. There is nothing in the world to equal *mal de mere* in the way of sickness. You have no desire to live, and there is but one thing you look forward to as a pleasure, and that is death. I speak from experience. I had not been a day out from New York when I would have gladly given all I had to some one to knock me in the head and cast my body into the sea. The only reason I did not was everybody I saw was in the same condition, and I did not have energy to ask the favor. I found out this remedy, and on my return walked the deck like an old sailor and watched those whose feelings I could so well describe. This does no good after the sickness comes on, but is a sure preventive."

"Just pass it around, for I wouldn't miss being on my feet when we pass out between the capes to-morrow," answered Jennie.

"Nor I, either," said Alice.

They were a merry party, and each tried to do all that was possible for the enjoyment of the others.

After a fairly good night's rest, they reached Norfolk just before six o'clock. They went aboard the steamer, as their staterooms were already engaged, and had ample time to bathe and be ready for breakfast.

They were ready to go on deck by the time Old Point was reached.

They could but notice the change which came over a large number of the passengers as they neared the capes. One by one they would make their way to their

staterooms—sometimes not being able to reach there before ‘casting up accounts!’

The early clouds, which threatened rain, disappeared, and the day proved all they could have wished it to be.

After seeing them to their hotel, in New York, Mr. Young left them, to look after some business affairs, and promised to join them at the earliest possible moment.

Dr. Gray was familiar with the city, and ordered a carriage to be in readiness at an early hour. They spent the day (only stopping long enough for a lunch) in sight-seeing.

The next morning they decided to take the trolley cars and see as much of suburban New York as they could in that way.

Mr. Young wired them that he would meet them at dinner that day at their hotel; consequently they arranged to be back by the specified hour.

It was decided that on their return they would accept a most cordial invitation from his parents to pay them a visit at their home, in New Jersey.

Mr. Young said business would detain him for several days, but he would join them just as soon as possible—certainly at Lake George, if not sooner. He was to be kept informed as to their movements daily, and would know just where to find them.

Niagara by moonlight is one of the grandest spectacles to be seen on this or any other continent.

How closely had the clouds been watched during

that ride. They knew that they would reach there at six o'clock, and all were so anxious that the full moon should not be darkened by a single cloud.

In each imagination was pictured Niagara as it would appear to them that night—unlike in many particulars, but each one saw it resplendent with the glow of the full moon.

They saw here and there a stray cloud in the heavens. But when they had taken supper and started for the falls, they saw only the blue heavens dotted with its myriads of stars, and high up, like a queen surrounded by her subjects, rode the silver orb of night, unclouded.

They saw the falls from every possible point, and at eleven o'clock they deemed it advisable to return to the hotel, as they had already ordered that they be called up at daylight to see the sun rise on the rushing waters.

"Macintosh, umbrella and overshoes will be the order of the day, I am afraid," said Eloise, when they met next morning.

"I was not aware, Mrs. Gray, that you were weather-wise before. Give us your reasons for thinking so. I am sure it seems that the sun is about to rise in all its glory."

"My reasons are easily given, and before night I am sure you will vote me weather-wise, at least. You can never forget my governess, Miss Constance Patterson. She was a dear old soul, but a trifle peculiar. One of her peculiarities was that I should daily learn the answers to five questions in familiar science. She

never excused me. I might get off from a geography or reading lesson sometimes, but never from dictionary or science. In that she was as inexorable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. These two little couplets I learned then, and I confess they've done me good service many times since, and I've felt grateful to the good woman :

'Evening red, and morning gray,
Sets a traveller on his way.'

'But evening gray, and morning red,
Brings down rain upon his head.'

"Observe the eastern horizon now and you'll see the promise fulfilled, I think. However, there must be some clouds, or we would not appreciate the sunshine."

"I'll get my umbrella and yours, too, Alice. The overshoes we already have on. We'll that far show our appreciation of the prophecy."

It is well for them that they did, for in less than an hour there was a steady downpour.

Alice and Jennie looked quite disconsolate, and wondered how they were to pass the day. The other pair, they thought, were in that state of bliss which cared not what the weather was.

Dr. Gray said :

"I'll go out and interview some of those hackmen ; but I suppose they'll make the pocketbook weep in unison with the clouds. I must say I cannot blame them."

"Please do, brother, and let us go over into Queen Vic's domains," said Alice. "I was so afraid we would have to leave before crossing over."

He came back in a little while and said :

"I think you had better keep on your waterproof garments, as we may wish to get out of the carriage to see several things. I think we will stay till dinner time and spend the afternoon in rest. I find our train leaves at a most unseasonable hour in the morning—five o'clock."

Soon they were off.

"This reminds me of a trip I took with a party to the Peaks of Otter three summers ago," said Jennie. "We went by rail to Liberty and spent the night. From there we drove to the hotel at the foot of the mountain. We were to spend the next day on top, so we retired with the chickens. At three o'clock we were up and dressed, ready to begin the ascent. If Eloise had been along she might have prognosticated the weather. As it was, we only thought it was dark because daylight had not dawned. We plodded on, led by a colored man, who carried the lantern. It did not seem to get any lighter as we neared the top. About a quarter of a mile from the summit the rain began to fall—occasional drops at first; but the nearer we approached the top, the faster came the rain. We were glad enough to seek shelter in the old house when we had gained the wished-for goal.

"Such a disappointed party! To see the sun rise

had been the incentive. Here we were, as disconsolate a party as had ever reached the spot.

"We tried to make the best of it, and ate our breakfast with as much relish as the circumstances would allow.

"One of the gentlemen suggested that we would not be able to get down the mountain that day, and he had heard that there were bears and rattlesnakes in unlimited quantities in the immediate neighborhood. That was sufficient to call out—just as he knew it would—all the nerves in the party. One girl begged to go at once. Another suggested that a large fire be built as a protection, saying she had always read that travellers did that to scare off animals.

"They were enjoying the discomfiture of the girls, when some one said the rain had ceased. Such scampering and scrambling there was to be first out on the rocks. It seemed almost incredible how quickly they were dry. Above us was the blue sky, below the clouds. First on one side and then on the other would they break away, displaying a panorama which could never be put on canvas. Then the thunder would be heard, and the lightning flash. We would betake ourselves to the house again. No less than six times did we have the repetition of that experience. It was grand beyond description. It was not what we hoped for, yet each one acknowledged that it was worth a dozen sunrises. Last night we had a lovely moonlight view, and to-night we'll have the electric light."

They saw the main points of interest on the Canadian side, and turned their faces toward the States again.

They had the desired opportunity of seeing the effect of the electric light.

The next night they spent many miles away from the roar of the great cataract.

A telegram from Mr. Young said he would meet them the next day at their next stopping place, on the shores of Lake George. They were delayed by a broken rail for a couple of hours, and found that he had arrived first and was awaiting them at the depot.

As only two days were allotted to them for this point, they were up and ready early for a row on the lake.

The gentlemen had first gone and tried two or three of the boats, before selecting one to suit. It required but little practice for them to row together.

They had gone as far as they desired, and landed for a while to look about them. They started back, and, in making a vigorous tug at the oar, off came one of Dr. Gray's suspender buttons.

Eloise looked at Jennie, who was convulsed with laughter.

"What is it, Miss Jennie? Surely not the loss of my button? I should have provided against this emergency. I'll be lucky to reach the starting point with one left."

That was too much for her. She blurted out :

"Eloise has a box full, assorted sizes, in her trunk, with thimble, scissors, needle and thread."

He glanced at Eloise, whose face was by this time crimson.

"Indeed, I have a greater treasure than I was aware of. That was extremely thoughtful," said her husband.

"Stop right there. 'Honor to whom honor is due,'" said Jennie. "I get very little credit for any good deeds. They always charge me up with all the bad ones, when I am in a crowd. It is entirely owing to my wisdom and forethought that the said articles were duly bought and put in place. I was afraid the first family broil would occur over just such an accident, and provided against it."

"That was certainly kind of you, and since the first has been averted, I hope the second will not occur."

They related the conversation at Sunnymeade, and told about Jennie buying them and the darning material while in Richmond, which she had hid away in Eloise's trunk one day while she was out. They enjoyed the joke very much.

"I do not think such disinterested favors should go unrewarded, and I'll promise that you shall be amply paid when your time comes to start off on a like journey," the Doctor said.

"This is hot work, Charlie," said Fred, "but we'll rest from our labors to-morrow in the mountains. I had a letter just as I was leaving home, saying every-

thing would be in readiness by the time of our arrival. There will be a lack of dissipation for the evenings, and we can enjoy the days to the full extent."

"I am so glad to hear that," said Eloise. "We country folks, you know, are used to early hours, and if we get into bad habits up here it will not be easy to break them."

"I suppose there will be music?" inquired Jennie.

"Yes, there will be a band; but for our own pleasure I sent up direct some of my own instruments. I think, with those, we can enliven our evenings sufficiently."

The next night found them snugly ensconced in their "little love of a cottage," as Alice called it. There were three chambers and a sitting-room.

With the morning came batches of letters for each. It was known that this was to be the first real stopping place—hence the home folks sent their missives.

Each one was busy for a while, and then began to tell some of the things contained in each.

"Father writes that he was at your home yesterday, and dined there. Some business must have taken him to town, Charlie," said Eloise.

"I guess so. Father mentions the fact that he was there; but he is there right frequently. This is a busy season on the farm, and some implement might be needed."

Two young girls are never thrown together long at a time before there must be some private conferences;

they are bound to get confidential. Soon Alice and Jennie were seen, arm in arm, promenading and talking to each other in an animated way.

We'll follow their footsteps and listen, as we are not to be excluded—only Eloise is not to know.

“What is the secret, Alice, which they do not want Eloise to find out?”

“You know, she thinks that she will live with us or board at some fashionable boarding house when we go home. But her father has bought her the loveliest home, only three blocks from our house. It is almost new, but he had it papered and painted before we left. He is buying the furniture now; that is what he and Miss Lizzie were in the city for. Mamma is to superintend the furnishing. They will go there at once, and the deed will be turned over to Eloise as her bridal present. Now, you must be very careful not to say a word; the Colonel is so anxious for her not to know it. I believe they will bring a cook from home for her.”

“Isn't she the most favored child of fortune you ever knew? But she deserves it all,” said Jennie.

“I think she is perfectly lovely, and I already love her as a sister,” said Alice. “I think Brother Charlie made a fine choice. The only thing mamma doesn't like about it is that she is a Baptist. She hopes she will not attend that church, but will get a pew in ours. I don't see anything to object to in it myself. I said that we Americans believed in religious freedom, and I thought people ought to do to suit themselves. She

wanted brother to promise to get a pew and tell her he preferred to attend with us."

This made Jennie almost shudder, for she thought at once of Aunt Hannah's trouble on this very subject, and feared that it might lead to real sorrow.

"What did he say to that?" she could not refrain from asking, though she felt she was prying into the private affairs of others.

"He said he would not meddle in any way with her religion, and she must not meddle with his lack of it. The Baptist church is made up of such plain people, mamma says, is the reason she objects. She is anxious for Eloise to go into society. If these people visit her she is afraid the best people in our set will not think well of it."

"There will be quite as much probability of turning her from her church as there would be to turn the needle of the compass to the south. The Lees and Carters, for generations, have been Baptists, when it meant something to emblazon it to the world that you were one," replied Jennie.

"Now, Jennie, whatever you do, don't mention about the housekeeping arrangement. They would be ever so angry with me if I let that cat out of the bag. They term me the 'leaky vessel of the family,' and consider very seriously sometimes about letting me into the family conclaves on that account."

"I certainly will not do it, but I expect I'll have a very sore tongue. I generally give it a bite whenever

it is about to do the wrong thing, and I'll often be tempted to say something about it. There is always a desire on my part to tell just what I ought not to. But I think I'll manage it. I know she'll just be delighted. I do not think I can go on home till that part of the fun is over," Jennie said.

"What is the programme for to-morrow? Do you know, Jennie?"

"There comes the Doctor and Mr. Young now. I see they have something to tell. I suppose it is about the arrangements for to-morrow; I think, though, it will be to climb that peak yonder," pointing to the highest point in front of them. "It looks like an impossibility, though."

They met them at the cottage, and were joined by Eloise, who had quite a batch of letters she had written.

"What decision, gentlemen, about to-morrow?" Eloise asked.

"If it suits the ladies, we'll go to the summit of that peak there, which is the highest in the group. It will be a day's journey.

"We could not decide till we saw what was in the stable. I think we've secured a pretty fair mount, and will get an early start. We can ride about ten miles. Fred says the road is good all the way until we've made about half of the ascent, when it becomes difficult on account of the rocks. We can leave our horses there and go afoot the rest of the distance," said Dr. Gray.

"It is well we came provided with our heavy boots and short skirts, Jennie. In these light shoes we could make but little progress," said Eloise. "Have you heavy ones, Alice?"

"Yes, indeed. It was an afterthought of mother's, and she had one of my last winter dresses made over for the occasion. I guess the jacket will come in very well after we are up there, even if it is June."

"Till evening we'll stroll about and enjoy ourselves in any way we please. An evening of music, and we'll retire early, to be ready for our journey," said Mr. Young.

Eloise asked if they thought to inquire about the services for Sunday at the hotel.

"Oh, yes!" replied Dr. Gray. "One of New York's greatest guns is to hold forth in the ball-room both morning and evening."

"That will be splendid, to have that pleasure. I was afraid we would be denied the privilege of hearing a sermon. I couldn't imagine what I would do with myself; I'll miss my boys so. I'll have to content myself with an imaginary visit to dear old Berea Sunday. I wish I could be an unobserved observer and see what the boys do."

"Now, Mrs. Eloise, I'll go through with the entire programme for you. I know just what each one will have to say. Poor Miss Mary has almost wished she had never seen them or heard of you. I can see the gloss on Jack Ferguson's face now. Not being used to

much soap, or water, either, it has a peculiar effect. I know Bob Sims has fallen back into the habit of catching flies again and pinching the other boys."

"Stop there, Jennie. You shall not malign my boys in that manner. I think Bob is forever done with those ugly habits. He promised to set a good example for the others, and I am sure he will."

"Dr. Gray, your first job after settling down at home will be to go out into the highways and hedges and compel some boys to come to Sunday-school for Eloise to teach. She would forsake you, and you would be obliged to warn the public against harboring your wife, who had forsaken your bed and board. Have I got the legal terms right, Mr. Young? She is obliged to have that work to do or be miserable," rattled Jennie.

Alice caught her breath and glanced first at Eloise and then at her brother to see how each was affected by it. She was very much relieved when her brother answered :

"I am afraid, Miss Jennie, she will not find me a very warm ally on the Sunday-school question. I can't tell whenever I was in one. Of course, I was sent and duly drilled in the catechism, the creed, Lord's prayer, and so on ; but I outgrew that just as I did my kilts and pinafores."

To some people is allowed the privilege of saying what they please to any and everybody without any exceptions being taken. Jennie Marvin belonged to this class. It all came about naturally, and what often seemed spoken in jest meant volumes in truth.

"All right, sir; but were you ever put back into those same kilts and pinafores, when you were disobedient, by way of a reminder? I am not so sure you'll not go to Sunday-school again, as old as you are. That girl can make anybody go, whether they want to or not. Did she tell you how she got the Fergusons to go?"

"No, indeed. Were they as hard subjects as you think I'll be?"

"Much harder. They fished, hunted and did lots of things on Sunday. She didn't ask them right out to go, but instead she went fishing with them, and carried a big lunch, and was 'hail fellow, well met,' with them, and the next Sunday there they were, looking as shiny as a glass button. If she had staid long enough, she would probably have gone out hunting with Pa Ferguson, and he would have gone, too."

"Aren't you ashamed, Jennie, to make fun of me in that manner?"

"I have only spoken the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Just let me know, Doctor, when you'll start, and I'll come and go with you, to help you out of your difficulties."

"All right; I'll send for you if you are living at a convenient distance, and are not too old to travel."

"I'll not be too old, I am sure, and expect to be found at Belmont 'for years, and it may be forever.'"

Alice made no remarks, but she noticed that her brother took the whole matter very pleasantly. She thought if her mother had seen him she would have

felt considerable uneasiness over the outcome of this church affair.

She went to her room, and very soon was fast asleep.

Eloise went in and got her hat and came out, and said :

"Come, Charlie, we'll go and mail these letters. I've some curiosity to find where that little stream begins. I do not think it can be far."

Fred asked if Miss Jennie wouldn't try some music with him. She assented, and he brought out the guitar and mandolin. They played well together, and spent the time in conversation and music till the Doctor and Mrs. Gray returned. They came in at the back entrance and stopped to listen while he sang "Kathleen Mavourneen."

The Doctor whispered to Eloise :

"That is favorable. I think they are progressing finely. I'll be delighted at the match. Won't you ?

"Yes, except that his home is a long way from ours. I do like him, though, and think that their mutual liking is fast increasing, too. He seems to enjoy her little sallies so much, especially when directed at you."

As they went out on the porch they saw a gentleman apparently directing his steps towards their cottage. Neither Fred nor Jennie had seen him till then. As he came nearer, Fred jumped up and rushed towards him.

"Why, Robert, old boy, where did you drop from ? I see no cloud which appears to have contained you.

Come in and let me introduce you to my friends, and then an explanation will be in order. Charlie, this is my friend, Robert Malcom, of whom you've heard me speak."

He introduced him to the ladies and said :

"Now, tell us, was this meeting intentional or by chance ?"

"Both. I got here this morning, and while idly turning over the hotel register I came across your name. I made some enquiries of the clerk, and he directed me hither. So you see it was chance first, then intentional afterwards."

"All the same, I am glad to see you. How long will you be here ?"

"That depends on circumstances. I haven't been at all well lately. The doctor ordered me to take a trip. I first thought of crossing the ocean, but my mother objected, and then I decided to try the mountains. My physician tells me that there is nothing at all serious, but I must give up business a while. If I improve, I may stay here ; if not, I'll change."

"Well, I think it fortunate you came here. We have a splendid party, and it is headed by my friend here, Dr. Charles Gray, than whom you'll not find a finer physician. He can minister to the body, the rest of us to the mind, and cure you. What do you say to that?"

"I should only be too glad to join your party, if ageeable to all concerned."

With one accord they welcomed him.

"Come out, Miss Alice. We have just taken the vote without you to welcome another tramp into our circle. Let me introduce to you my friend, Mr. Malcom, Miss Gray. As you had no vote in the matter, we'll give you the privilege of voting him out if he doesn't suit us."

"I am indebted to you and Jennie for your very soothing music. It lulled me to sleep, and would have kept me there if my curiosity had not gotten the better of me, and I had to come to see who the visitor was," Alice said.

"Do you feel equal to a ten-mile ride, and a pretty steep climb afterwards, Mr. Malcom?" asked Dr. Gray. "Our plans are made for a trip of that kind to-morrow, and we'll be glad to have you join us."

"I think so ; I am suffering more from nervous depression than anything else, I think. It may be that will be just what I need."

"Just come in with me and we'll talk over your case, and if there is any reason for you not to go, I'll plainly tell you."

After investigation, Dr. Gray told him outdoor exercise and cheerful company would do more than medicine to put him in good condition."

He went at once to secure a horse. He said he would not see them till the next morning, as he was rather fatigued.

"I am certainly glad we met Malcom. He is a

capital fellow. He has been too closely confined to his business, is the only trouble, isn't it, Charlie?"

"He has the misfortune to be the only child of a doting mother. She no doubt magnifies his ailments and makes him really worse. I think he will be all right by a few weeks rest and exercise. I can tell as I see more of him."

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER ADDITION TO THE PARTY.

EARLY Saturday morning they set out on their journey. They had to go a little slowly, as Alice was not an expert rider, and felt a little timid.

By nine o'clock they had begun the ascent of the mountain.

Higher up they came to the stable where their horses were to be cared for. They were surprised at the fine appointments of the café, where they stopped to lunch.

Mr. Young had sent an order the day preceding to prepare a dinner for the party at four o'clock. He had not mentioned that fact to them. They concluded, at his suggestion, only to take sandwiches and coffee, and dine later.

When the highest point had been reached, they felt fully repaid. The magnificence of the extended panorama was beyond their wildest expectations. Their guide told them of many strange adventures of parties who had preceded them. He carried, in a belt buckled around his waist, several pistols. The ladies wanted to know if he often used them. He said almost every day he killed a snake; that he found it a surer way to dispatch them, as he could do it at a greater distance, and thus avoid being struck by them.

He warned them to be on the alert. He led the way as they went down, beating the stunted bushes as he went. Soon they heard him cry, "Look out!" He drew his pistol and fired twice, and there before them was a deadly moccasin writhing in the death throes.

"Do not come near," he said. "If he should strike you now it would prove fatal."

He lifted him to one side on his stick, and they passed on.

"Be careful now," said he. "They always go in pairs. The other one is not far off."

They were very glad to find a hot dinner awaiting them. They did full justice to it.

The horses were fresh and they enjoyed the ride back extremely.

Dr. Gray asked Mr. Malcom how he had enjoyed the trip.

He said:

"I am sure I feel very much better than if I had not met your party and joined myself to it. I should certainly not have gone this distance, and perhaps not out at all. I must write to my mother and tell her how well I stood the trip. She will hardly know how to believe it. I know she will feel under many obligations to the members of the party for having allowed me to join them."

The Sabbath was a day of quiet. The whole party went to hear the sermon. It was a fine discourse from a celebrated Presbyterian minister from New York.

The days flew by on wings, it seemed to each of the party. Since Mr. Malcom came, Mr. Young and Jennie took longer strolls alone. There were often tell-tale blushes on her cheek when some of the party would venture to joke them. It seemed as if in their case the path of true love ran more smoothly than usual.

The time to turn their faces homeward is almost upon them. Fred said he must go ahead of them a day or two, but would meet them and consider the whole party his guests while in that section. If there were any trips to be made to New York, it could be easily done from his home.

He left with the understanding that he was to meet them at the boat two days later.

They were promptly on hand, and expected to be taken to the hotel. Instead, the carriages drove to one of the handsomest homes on a fashionable street.

They were ushered in and introduced to Mrs. Young and her daughter, Mrs. Garrett, who made them very welcome. The three days spent here were numbered among the most pleasant of the whole journey. To every place of interest they were taken, and everything was done by the charming hostess and her daughter and sons to make their stay agreeable.

Mr. Young, senior, was absent in the West, looking after some business interests.

The farewells were said and the travelers were off for old Virginia. Jennie convulsed the party by wish-

ing she could go on a bridal tour every month. It was suggested that she would have to live where it was easy to obtain divorces. She said :

“Of course, I meant some one else—just as I’ve been on this one.”

To the question put by Dr. Gray, “Shall we stop in Washington?” Eloise said, “Not unless the girls are very anxious. I’ve enjoyed this whole month to the fullest extent, but now I am hungry for Virginia.”

The girls seemed to feel likewise, so they made a close connection, and at noon found themselves at home.

They were driven home, and Eloise was quite lionized by her new relations. She was shown to her room in what she thought was her father-in-law’s house. There were so many of her belongings from Sunny-meade that she felt almost homesick.

After changing her dress for a dinner gown, and trying to do her best to be very brave in her new position, she said to the Doctor, who had come for her :

“I am ready to go to the parlor now. I do not want them to form a bad opinion of me on the start. Then there are so many things in here to remind me of home that I am afraid I’ll get a little blue. It was thoughtful of Aunt Lizzie to send them. I am sure she and father will come as soon as they know I’ve come. What amuses you in that, Charlie? Do you think I am babyish to want to see them so much?”

“We’ll go down now, if you are ready.”

Jennie and Alice were awaiting her in the hall. She

thought they, too, seemed to be very full of something which they would like to divulge.

As she entered the parlor she found herself clasped in her father's arms, and Aunt Lizzie waiting for her turn. Before she had realized the situation there was another vigorous hug.

"Bless yer heart, honey, Mammy couldn't let Marse John and Miss Lizzie come widout her; she was jes' so hungry for a sight of dis baby."

Turning to Mrs. Gray, she said :

"Mother, this was so kind and thoughtful of you to have them here. I was almost ready to cry for a sight of them when Charlie came up; but knowing how a man hates to see a woman in tears, I choked them back."

"I am very glad, daughter, to have aided in this, but I think you are indebted to some one else for it. It was your father's plan from beginning to end. I've something else to show you now to remind you of home."

"Into the dining-room they went next. She noticed her father had a paper in his hand, but thought nothing of it. Into the kitchen next—and there was Ellen, one of the home cooks.

"Why, Ellen, did you come to live with Mother Gray on my account? I suppose Mammy sent you on to keep a watch on me."

"One more place, and one more friend."

Into the yard, and there stood a beautiful Jersey, munching her cud complacently.

"Why, Daisy, and you in the city, too! What does it all mean? There is some mystery attached to it all."

"This explains it all; read it at your leisure. It is all yours, and you are the lady of the house, and must do the honors of the occasion."

And she did—by bursting into a flood of tears and throwing her arms around her father's neck.

"Oh, father, how lovely it all is! I am so happy! I am afraid I can never repay you for all your goodness to me."

"I am amply repaid, dear child, in seeing you happy. I have enjoyed this little surprise for you more than you can imagine. Aunt Lizzie and I found most excellent and willing helpers in Mrs. Gray and the other members of the family."

"I must say, Colonel, that I am very glad that you, and not I, caused the first tears this little woman has shed as Mrs. Gray. The only symptoms of weeping I saw was when an old blind fiddler came to our cottage in the Adirondacks, and, because we were all in such a happy state, we put so many nickles and dimes into his cup, he persisted in playing 'Home, Sweet Home,' 'Carry Me Back to Old Virginia,' and 'I Am Gwine Back to Dixie,' *ad infinitum*. I saw the blue eyes were about to overflow, and suggested 'Yankee Doodle' as a way out of the dilemma."

Eloise called Jennie to her and said:

"Did you know about this?"

"I certainly did, Mrs. Gray. Why do you ask? Do you mean to insinuate that I am a sifter?"

"If you knew it and didn't tell, I am sure there is no truth in the adage that 'there is nothing new under the sun.'

"Well, if you must know about it, my tongue will not recover from the numerous bitings it had when I found it was about to slip in this direction, for a whole month."

"I think, said Dr. Gray, "that the prospects are exceedingly fine for two young ladies of our acquaintance to change their places of abode before very long. If I am not mistaken, we'll have some fellows trying the effect of Virginia's climate before many weeks."

"You brought the tell-tale blushes, Charlie," said Colonel Carter. "These must be the attractive ladies. When shall we expect Mr. Young, Jennie?"

"Really, Colonel, I didn't think to ask him a word about it. I was remiss in that particular, I am sure. I'll have to get Dr. Gray to find out for you."

"I cannot tell you the exact time; but he said, 'I'll be coming your way before long, Charlie, and will see you.' The other fellow was not so communicative, though he expressed the wish to visit Virginia in the near future, as it had been a long cherished wish, etc."

Dinner was announced.

"Who is to sit at the head of the table?" was asked.

"Aunt Lizzie and father must take the places they are used to, if it appears at all home-like," answered Eloise.

Never was there a happier party seated around a table than that one. Even Mrs. Gray didn't let the thought of her daughter-in-law associating with the Baptists come into her mind a single time. She was forced to admit that no young man had made a more brilliant match, from many standpoints, than her son. She cherished the secret wish that she might find her more plastic than she was thought to be. If so, she builded many air castles as to the furor she would make in society, and what a help she might be in that direction to Alice.

"Well, daughter, we'll go home to-night, but you'll see us often. Do not get so wedded to this home that you'll not want to come as often as you can to the other one. As I told you, though, I've weighed this matter well and recognized that your first duty is to your husband. Yet I feel that I have my same place in your heart, and will always keep it."

"I do wish you could stay ; but you'll come real often, and I am going to do the same."

At an early hour all the guests left, Jennie going with Colonel Carter and Miss Lizzie.

Aunt Hannah came in to say good-bye.

"Now, chile, I'se told Ellen to look after you and see that you always wore your over-shoes, and that the clo'es were all well dried. Take good keer of yourself, and ef you needs Mammy, all you got ter do is ter tell Mars John ter send me on. If I gits mighty hungry ter see you, I's comin' of my own accord."

"That's right, Mammy. I'll always be glad to see you, and you know you'll always be welcome here."

"Well, here we are, under our own vine and fig tree, with none to molest or make us afraid," said Dr. Gray. "Let's go over the house and see it from attic to cellar. I saw it a good many times before I left, but the painters and paper-hangers were holding high carnival when I was in last."

Over it they went, just like two children with a lot of new toys. The last thing they saw was the most attractive.

To the kitchen last. Ellen had everything beautifully arranged.

"I tell you, Miss Eloise, this kitchen beats ours at home all to pieces. True 'tain't so big, but much more convenient. Things all so handy. I'se got to git use' to coal, like Daisy is to dat tub of water. She don't like it one bit. She didn't give no milk hardly de night she got here. She let it down pretty well dis mornin'. Is you seen in de pantry? Did you ever, now! Dat's de best of all."

"I think it is. Just look, Charlie; we'll have to open a store. Who but dear old father would have thought of all this. I am so afraid I am not grateful enough for it all."

"What time will you have tea, Mrs. Housekeeper? I must put in an appearance at my office and see Dr. Jones as to my patients. I may call by and see if Miss Belle has returned from her outing."

"Seven o'clock, sharp, and mind you are on time. If not—well, you'll find out who is Mrs. Housekeeper, and what a sharp tongue she has."

She remained in the kitchen for some time, asking questions about Sunnymeade. Ellen told her the principal events which had transpired since her marriage. The arrangements for supper were all made, and she went to her room and put on one of her prettiest muslins, and awaited her husband.

He came promptly, and they seated themselves at the table. She paused and looked at her husband. She felt that to begin life thus without asking God's blessing on it would be, of all things, the most ungrateful.

"Aren't you going to ask a blessing, Charlie?"

"My dear, I never did such a thing in my life, and I feel that it would be a most inappropriate thing for me to do."

Without a word she bowed her head and simply asked God to bless them in their new home, and to give them grateful hearts for the many blessings which had been given them. They chatted pleasantly throughout the meal. She felt that if this cross was to be taken up, it must be done at once. There was no allusion made to it by either one.

Before they were quite through, Alice ran in. She said:

"Please excuse me, Eloise, for my lack of formality, but I got so lonesome I was obliged to come."

"Only on one condition, and that is that you'll get lonesome very often, and come here every time you do."

"I told mamma it would not make the least difference with you—that you were a regular old shoe."

"I am glad you came, Alice, for you can be company for Eloise while I am away. I found that there were one or two patients Dr. Jones wished me to see to-night."

"This is the coziest home I ever saw, Eloise, and you were so surprised. Jennie and I used to talk it over and be so afraid we would let the secret out."

"I just think it perfectly wonderful that Jennie ever kept it. Did you go everywhere to-day?" she asked Alice.

"No."

"Charlie and I went into every nook and corner, even to Daisy's stable, and found nothing wanting."

"Father and mother are coming for me. I think I hear them now."

"I am very glad to see you and hope you'll come very often," said Eloise, as she met them at the door.

"Oh, I guess you'll see a little too much of the women folks, said Mr. Gray. "They'll certainly not let you get lonely. Janet and I came to say that you and Charlie will be expected to drink tea with us to-morrow night, and we want you to feel perfectly free and easy with us under any and all circumstances. Just as you would do at your own home we would wish you to do at ours."

"I appreciate your kindness very highly. I have always been heart-hungry for brothers and sisters. I

am sure Alice and I will enjoy being together and I'll expect her to stay with me a great deal."

During the next few days there were many callers. The set about whom Mrs. Gray was so anxious were not at all slow in paying their respects to the bride. She was too well and favorably known for them to miss the opportunity of being among the earliest visitors.

There was but one verdict from the entire number, and that was that she was in every way suited to adorn Dr. Gray's home. They pronounced her a most charming hostess.

On Friday afternoon, Mr. Elliott's card was brought to her. She went to the parlor at once. She had in her mind compared this pastor with the only one she had ever known. She wondered if she could ever feel towards him as she did to Dr. Gordon. She had fully made up her mind to like him and in every way possible lend a helping hand in the work of the church.

Her first impression was most favorable. His manner was easy and graceful, with a voice soft and rich. She felt at once drawn towards him and his work. After the usual conversation natural to such a meeting, he said :

"Sister Gray, I received a letter yesterday from your pastor, enclosing your church letter, which he said he had advised you to present at your earliest convenience. I have it with me. Shall I retain it,

or will you take it and present it when the doors are opened for the reception of new members?"

"Indeed, you'll have to do just what is your custom in like cases. You know I've only known one church at home. I was reared in it; Dr. Gordon baptized my mother, officiated at the marriage of my parents and at my own. So you see I only know how they do things at Berea; but I suppose it is about the same the world over."

"Yes. I open the doors of the church at every service. If it suits you, then, I'll just keep the letter and present it when you come forward Sunday morning—that is, if you expect to be present."

"I shall certainly be there, even if I have to come alone. You know physicians are not to be always counted upon for regularity in anything beyond their profession. I've made up my mind that I'll not let that hinder my attendance. I always expect to feel at home in a Baptist church, wherever it is. I may not be able to attend Sunday-school just now, but hope to do so soon. I am very glad you came before the Sabbath, as I'll not feel so much a stranger."

"I should have called anyhow this week, but Dr. Gordon urged me to come at once. He said, 'It is the hardest task I've ever performed, to calmly send this letter to be put into another church; but a stern sense of duty demands it.' He knew that the remainder of the letter was to be strictly private, so he told her no more of it; but it made him feel an anxiety for her,

which he plainly saw was troubling Dr. Gordon—that is, he feared she would meet with the opposition of her husband's family, even if he offered none, in the attendance on his own church.

As he rose to leave, Mrs. Gray and Dr. Allison were announced. He deferred his departure long enough to be introduced to Mrs. Gray ; Dr. Allison he already knew.

After the exchange of a few pleasant remarks he left.

“I am sorry, Eloise, that Mr. Elliott got in ahead of us. I felt sure we would get here first. I am afraid he has exacted the promise of you to attend his church. I brought Dr. Allison along to extend you an invitation and to add his persuasion to mine for you to attend our church. I wanted Charlie to procure a pew beforehand, but he wouldn't do it. Of course, you will be perfectly welcome with us. I thought you would feel more independent with a pew of your own. I had gone so far as to select a name-plate for it.”

In her anxiety over the matter she allowed it to get the better of her discretion, and said much more than it was her intention to do.

At the very first pause Dr. Allison said :

“Indeed, Mrs. Gray, we had no other expectation but that you would cast your lot with us. Indeed, it would seem a little strange for a member of the Gray family to go elsewhere. I assure you, madam, we will welcome you very heartily into our communion.”

She wanted to make the right reply, and felt so

much afraid she would not, that she became a little confused.

"Indeed, I very much appreciate your—" She was about to say kindness, but she felt that she would be telling an untruth. So she hesitated a second, and added—"solicitude."

The thought flashed through her mind, "Is that a better word?" She hardly felt that it was. "But I feel that my duty is plain, and I'll unite with Mr. Elliott's church on the Sabbath. My people, for generations, have all been Baptists, and I am sure I could be nothing else if I tried," she replied. I shall certainly take great pleasure in sometimes attending your services, Dr. Allison. Whenever Dr. Gray wishes to go, I'll be only too glad to go with him."

They remained but a short while longer. No sooner had they reached the street than Mrs. Gray said.

"Did you ever see a young person so set in her ways as she is? I certainly think she might have seemed more appreciative."

"That is the way with all the Baptists. It is very seldom you can change one of them. I am afraid we did not go slowly enough. It was a little unfortunate that we met Mr. Elliott there," answered Dr. Allison.

"I see only one hope in the matter. She said she would go with Charlie whenever he wished to go. We'll have to turn our batteries on him, and try to persuade him to go oftener. You talk with him, Doctor, the very first opportunity you have. I tried to

get him to assert himself from the very first, and tell her she must go with us. But he said he wouldn't meddle with her religion. I hope she will not feel called on to make a Baptist of him."

"I think you needn't give yourself any uneasiness on that score, Mrs. Gray."

"Another trouble will be Alice; I've never seen any one so completely carried away with another as she is with Eloise."

"I think she is a remarkably attractive young woman, and Dr. Gray is certainly to be congratulated on his selection," replied Dr. Allison. "While she was not at all slow to assert her principles, on sober thought I admire her the more for it. I doubt if she would have mentioned the subject, if we had not first broached it. Then she was certainly dignified in her reply—very much so for one so young. She is only nineteen, you said."

"Just nineteen, and, considering the fact that she has been so very much petted and indulged, she is remarkably womanly, I think," said Mrs. Gray.

"If it were not for Charlie's strong will-power, I would expect him to be like potter's clay in her hands, so great is his love and admiration for her."

CHAPTER XII.

MRS. GRAY UNITES WITH THE CITY CHURCH.

How many prayers went up from that heart of the petted child of fortune that she might stand firmly by her principles.

She had never felt at all that her husband would attempt to interfere with her church privileges. That was not the source of trouble. She saw that he felt no interest in his own salvation. How often did memory carry her over those conversations with Mammy on this subject. She had never spoken to him on the matter which now seemed of so much importance. She feared to do anything which might make it harder to reach him later on.

She laid the whole thing bare to her Heavenly Father and asked his direction in leading her to do and say just the right thing.

"Silence is golden," she thought. "If I can live in such a way as to impress him, and make him fall in love with my religion, he may desire to know of my Saviour." Her last prayer on closing her eyes was for divine guidance.

Sunday came, and to her surprise her husband said at the breakfast table :

"Are you going to Sunday-school?"

"No ; I thought I was such a stranger here, that I would wait till I had met some of the members. Mr. Elliott invited me to come. As I'll cast my lot with them to-day, I suppose they'll find work for me to do. I could not think of being idle in the church. Dear old Doctor Gordon always says, 'Show me an idle Christian and I'll show you a pious devil.' He seems to think one quite as much of an anomaly as the other."

"I'll be here in time to escort you to church, then. I do not expect to be able to go often ; but suppose it would be considered very bad form not to go to-day. Wouldn't it, little woman ?" he said.

"Remember, I'll be always glad to have you, but certainly will not stay away because you will not be able to go."

"That is right."

He really felt relieved ; for, to tell the truth, he had felt some twinges of conscience on this very point. He knew full well it would be expected of him by the people.

Many a pair of eyes were turned upon them as the usher showed them to a seat not far from the front.

Dr. Gray was a well-known figure upon the street, but no one had ever seen him at a service in that church before. Of course, there was considerable speculation as to whether the bride was a Baptist or not.

After the sermon, Mr. Elliott announced that the doors of the church would be opened to receive new

members, either by letter or as candidates for baptism. He gave out that old-fashioned hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love," and asked that any who wished to confess Christ or join by letter from some sister church would come forward.

What conflicting emotions there were in Eloise's breast! In imagination she went back to dear Berea. There she saw in their accustomed seats her father and Aunt Lizzie. She felt that in a measure this step was a separation from them. But again she remembered that God's church of his divine planting was but one.

The beginning of the second verse aroused her from her reverie. She quietly rose and went forward. At the same time a young man walked down another aisle; then came a gentleman, lady and little girl.

Mr. Elliott met them and gave each a warm grasp of the hand.

After the hymn he said:

"Brethren, I have three letters in regular form—one from Berea Baptist church, for Mrs. Dr. Charles Gray; the other two from Antioch, for Mr. and Mrs. George Clark. What is your pleasure, brethren?"

A gray-haired brother said:

"I move they be received."

"I second the motion," said another.

"All in favor of this motion, please say 'Aye.'"
There was a most hearty response. "All opposed, 'No.'"
Profound silence reigned.

“As there is no opposition, you are unanimously received.”

Turning to the little girl he said :

“Brethren, this is Myrtle, the daughter of our brother and sister Clark, who presents herself as a candidate for baptism. I’ve carefully examined her and find that she fully comprehended her condition as a sinner, and her full reliance on Christ as her Saviour. Her father and mother tell me that she has indulged this hope for months ; but they preferred to delay the matter on account of her age ; they now think they have no right longer to delay. And this young brother, Thomas Fletcher, is well known to us all. He tells me that he has put his trust in the Saviour and desires to walk with him and do what he can in his service.”

They were both received as candidates for baptism.

“As pastor of this church, I extend to you the right hand of Christian fellowship. May the Lord bless each one of you and make you useful in his vineyard. While some familiar hymn is being sung, the brethren and sisters will come forward and welcome these, who have come to live with us to-day.”

Some brother started that grand old stand-by of the Christian warrior,

“Am I a soldier of the cross.”

The members responded heartily to the request, and gave a most cordial and hearty welcome to the new members.

To Dr. Gray this was a strange experience. He had never witnessed anything of the kind in his life, and he certainly could not define the impression made upon him.

After the benediction several of his acquaintances came up and shook hands with him, and told him they were glad to see him.

Dr. Morrison, one of the deacons, said to him :

"Gray, I had no idea you had done so well. I knew it was a first-class marriage in every other respect, but had no idea you had gotten a Baptist wife."

As they walked home, he said :

"Eloise, I thought you Baptists opposed infant baptism."

"Pray, who said we didn't?" she answered.

"Why, they welcomed that little Clark girl, who I am sure is not ten years old, just as heartily as they did the other four adults. If she is not an infant, what do you call her?"

"She entered that church to-day just as I did at Berea, and as her father and mother did at Antioch—on a profession of faith in Christ. She had her own experience. I was no older than she is, I guess, when I was baptized."

"I never saw any one baptized by immersion except a lot of colored folks in the river. I thought it lots of fun," he said.

"There are only two ordinances in our church, and

to me they are the most solemn in the world—Baptism and the Lord's Supper—and one naturally precedes the other, consequently we cannot accept infant baptism."

By this time they had reached home and the conversation ended.

Pretty soon Alice ran in.

"You see, Eloise, I am obeying instructions—to come whenever I get ready. I didn't do it, however, this time. I felt like I ought to come and go with you to your church, to-day ; but mama wouldn't let me."

"I am sorry you could not come. But if it suits Charlie, we'll go with you to hear Dr. Allison to-night," Eloise said pleasantly.

"That will suit exactly. Mama said she would expect you to tea to-night, and I know she'll be glad to have you go with us."

"You can just tell mother that she need not be at all uneasy about your going there, Alice. I ran the gauntlet very successfully. They didn't offer to baptize me ; though Dr. Morrison thought it a cause for extra congratulations that I had done so well as to get a wife out of that flock."

"I tell you what you would enjoy, Alice," said Eloise, "and that is one of our country basket meetings. Did you ever attend one?"

"I never did. Why do you call them basket meetings?" Alice asked.

"Why, we go in the morning and stay till after an afternoon service, and carry dinner. Between the two sermons we have an intermission and eat our dinners."

"Do you have them at your church?"

"Yes. There will be one some time during the summer, and we'll go. I really want you to visit Sunnymeade, and that will be a good time."

"I haven't been consulted yet," said Dr. Gray.

"We'll do that later on, sir; just now we'll do something more important, as dinner is ready," Eloise replied.

Every time Alice met her brother's wife she was more deeply impressed with her beauty of character.

"I should like to remain with you ladies so much, but I am late now getting around to see my patients. I expect I'll just have time to get supper. So you can go on with Alice, and I'll meet you there."

Several of the deacons called in the afternoon, and the superintendent also. He came to invite her to join them and take charge of a class.

"I am afraid you'll not be so anxious for it if I tell you it is a class of boys who have given trouble. The fact is, when you joined the church to-day, I thought of you as a way out of the difficulty. I said to myself, 'She doesn't know them, and they will have to find her out, so while they are getting acquainted, she may devise some means of interesting them.' You'll admit my honesty, at least, Mrs. Gray."

"My class at home was composed of boys from ten

to sixteen, and I so much hated to give them up. However, they have a most excellent teacher. I am waiting to hear from them with much anxiety. I'll do the best I can for them, Mr. Saunders. The only trouble is, I'll necessarily be absent sometimes. I'll go home, and will expect to stay over the Sabbath. You know I couldn't give up that pleasure."

"That will be all right, if you can succeed in taming them," Mr. Saunders replied.

The service at the Episcopal church was very much enjoyed by Eloise. Dr. Allison's sermon was plain and practical.

"There will be considerable difficulty in my remembering all the people I've been introduced to to-day," she said to her husband as they went home. "I certainly would be sorry to forget any of them."

"Well, the only advice I can give you is to do as mother's friend, Mrs. Bronson—to whom she introduced you—does."

"How is that?"

"Why, the old thing is so near-sighted she cannot see anything two feet off. She has a holy horror of appearing old, so will not wear glasses. To avoid giving offence to her friends she kisses all the women and bows in a most cordial manner to the men."

With her household duties and visiting, Eloise was kept so very busy that she did not suffer from homesickness, as she thought she would.

She often felt that underneath the cheerful vein of

all of her father's letters she could detect the heart-hunger he felt for her. She expected him to visit her during the week, and was not at all surprised when she heard Ellen's exclamation :

"Lor', Miss Eloise, here's Marse John."

She gave him a detailed account of her first Sabbath. He felt gratified at her cordial reception in the church.

She also told him of Mrs. Gray's and Dr. Allison's visit, and their conversation. She had not mentioned to her husband a word that either said to her. She thought it the part of wisdom to say as little on that subject as possible, and await events.

When her father left, it was understood that she would pay them a visit the following week, and, if possible, Dr. Gray would spend the Sabbath with them, and she would return with him. She felt that she would much prefer the frequent short visits to longer ones, not so often.

Sunday came, and according to promise she went to Sunday-school. She felt quite nervous over the prospect of her class.

After the preliminary services were over, Mr. Saunders introduced her to the boys, eight in number. He said :

"Boys, Mrs. Gray says she prefers to teach boys ; so, as you are without a teacher, I'll turn you over to her."

"Well, boys, I am glad to know you. I'll not feel so homesick for my country boys now. I've missed them so much."

One little freckle-faced boy at the end of the seat eyed her critically as she talked.

He nudged his next neighbor and whispered half audibly:

"She is givin' us taffy. Nobody in such a rig as that ain't from the country. More like New York. Do you believe her?"

She could not help hearing the remarks, though she tried not to appear at all attentive to them.

"Don't know," was the reply. "I got kinfolks in the country. They don't look like her, you bet. Them diamonds must have cost a sight of a money."

"Listen! What's that she's tellin'?" said the freckled urchin.

"I had a letter from my country boys yesterday. I have it here in my Bible, and if you would like to know something about them I'll read it to you. I just wish you could see what a healthy, happy set they are."

For the first time she received a reply:

"Read it," said two or three at one time.

"Of course, all did not write. The oldest boy wrote this time. Another will write next time."

"NORTON, July 12, 1877.

"*Dear Miss Eloise:*

"According to promise, I'll write to you to tell you how we are getting on at Berea S. S. We have missed you so much, especially our class. I am glad to tell you that the boys come pretty regular.

"Aleck and Jack haven't missed a single time.

They take a book out every Sunday to read in the evening. Aleck says it keeps him from doing what he used to do. He asked me to pick him out a book last week, and I got 'Coster Grew.' He said he wished he could find a friend to help him get some education like Coster did.

"Miss Mary gets on tolerably well. The most of the boys know their lessons every Sunday. I reckon the Colonel wrote you that Tommy Clark had been baptized. When are you coming here? Miss Mary says you may teach us when you come. The boys all send love.

"Very truly, your scholar,

"GORDON GLENN."

"I do not think we'll have much time for our lesson now; but we did not know each other, so I thought we would take a little time to get acquainted. How many of you know your lesson? Hold up your hand, if you do."

Not a hand was raised.

"I hardly expected that you would know it. The superintendent told me that you had not had a regular teacher lately. We always get a little lazy when we do not expect to be called on to recite. Can any one tell us what it is about?"

One hand was raised.

"Well, you may answer. What is it?"

"About Joseph and his brethren."

Then in a simple way she told them the story, and

while there was much restlessness, she felt it was not an hour entirely lost.

The superintendent had wisely remained at a distance. When the bell tapped, she said :

“ I hope to see all of you next Sunday.”

The visit to her home was in every respect perfectly delightful. It made her, if possible, more appreciative of it. She saw, as far as possible, all of the neighbors.

While it was all enjoyed to the full, Sunday seemed to her the best day of all.

Dr. Gray came, and they went to Berea. Her boys were all in place, and Miss Mary gave a very satisfactory account of them.

Dr. Gordon did not seem more feeble than he was at her marriage, yet she realized that he was failing, and the thought troubled her. She could but picture the flock without its shepherd. She knew all would miss him, but none more than the Sunnymeade household. He announced that their protracted meeting would begin the first Sunday in September, and he had procured the services of a brother from Richmond.

Eloise reminded Dr. Gray of her engagement with Alice to attend this meeting.

Jennie Marvin had spent most of the time with her. She promised a visit to her new home in the near future.

Dr. Gray said to her :

“ What is the latest from New Jersey, Miss Jennie ?”

"The peach crop is almost an entire failure, but the harvest of mosquitoes is the most prolific known to the memory of the oldest inhabitants," she answered as promptly as if it had been the most important item she knew.

"Ah! That accounts for Fred's desire to leave the State and take up his abode in Virginia for a while. I had a letter yesterday saying he would see me by the last of the week. The coward! I had no idea he would desert old friends in that shameful way. He was brought up with the crew, and had just as well stand by them. Don't you think so?"

"That depends on circumstances. Some old friends bleed us shamefully, sometimes, and—"

"Yes, yes, I see just how it is," interrupted Dr. Gray, "and one must of necessity seek new ones, who will sometimes use you worse, if possible, eh? Be kind to him, Miss Jennie, and make up his losses to him."

"He is coming to see you. I'll not be there either to make or mar his happiness. You have not invited me to meet him."

"No necessity for that, when I expect he will do just as he said—see me, and pass on in this direction."

"We'll see about that later. Is Mr. Malcom coming with him?" she asked.

"Surely, you do not want two buttons on the same string?"

"I haven't mentioned buttons to you since I fur-

nished yours on Lake George. But I don't mind telling you, in a friendly way, you know, that Alice will take charge of one button."

"Home again and work for me, my little wife," he said on their arrival. "I so much enjoyed the days spent at Sunnymeade. Everything is so restful there."

"Of course, the old home is everything to me ; yet I am very happy in this one. I, too, must be busy, for Jennie, I expect, will come back with Fred, and they'll be here together several days. He wrote her Mr. Malcom would come with him, if he could possibly leave his business. His health is so much improved that he cannot claim any time on that score. I guess Alice can inform us correctly on the subject. Of course, we will entertain the party. That will mean right much to such a novice as I am. I'll coax father and aunt Lizzie to come, and I'll be all right then," Eloise said.

"Charlie, no not forget to look around to find some position for Aleck Ferguson. That boy must come here and get advantages he can never have at home. If he could get just enough to board and clothe him the first year and have the advantage of a night school, it would mean so much to him."

"All right ; I'll not forget."

CHAPTER XIII.

MAMMY'S PREDICTION VERIFIED.

ELOISE had listened very closely to all that her husband said ; for never had she forgotten Mammy's conversation on the subject of his profanity.

Lately she had felt that he had been misrepresented, though she knew that Aunt Hannah was fully persuaded that such was true of him before she mentioned it to her.

Dr. Gray, in the meantime, had very zealously guarded his tongue, lest he should in her presence say something which he full well knew would be very offensive to her.

One morning, as she was passing his office, she thought she would go in quietly and surprise him. As her hand was on the knob she heard him use language which was certainly not suited to be repeated. It was too late to retreat, so she went in to find him and one of his friends, whom she had often met, engaged in a very excited conversation. Both looked confused. To each came the same thought—did she hear?

She tried to appear unconcerned, but succeeded poorly in the effort.

"I came like a thief in the night," she said.

"I am sure we are more pleased to see you than we would be to see the thief," said the friend.

Truthfully, though, if they had been perfectly sure she had heard what she really did, they would have much preferred the thief.

"Oh, I was just passing and ran in for a moment. I always do, if the buggy is at the door."

Dr. Gray felt that he would have been willing to do almost anything to recall those words. He knew they went like an arrow into her heart, if she heard, and he was almost sure she did.

"By the way, I am glad you came in, for two reasons," he said.

He determined to put the best face on it possible and appear nonchalant, if he felt otherwise.

"A letter from Fred says he'll be here Thursday or Friday. He will go to the country Saturday; he will remain there for several days. The rest of the programme you know. Malcom will meet them here then, and they propose to go to the Natural Bridge and several other places, provided they can find agreeable company. He asks you to chaperone the party."

"Perhaps mother would do it. I heard her say a few days ago she was anxious for just such an outing, and was urging Father Gray to take her."

"The other matter was about your *protege*, Aleck. I think I have a place to suit him exactly. A new art and book store combined is to be opened next week, and I have the promise of a position for him at a small salary to begin with."

"I am delighted at that. I'll write to father, so he

can let them know about it, and give his mother time to get him ready."

She bade the Doctor and his friend good-morning, and left with a heavier heart than she had carried for many months.

She walked aimlessly along, busy with her own thoughts. She felt crushed, as if some great blow had fallen upon her.

She fully realized what he really was in her estimation. He had been so true, so manly, so affectionate in all things to her. He did not attend church regularly, but she allowed his large practice to excuse that. She noticed that he was an attentive listener when he did go. She always prayed that some arrow of conviction might be sent into his heart whenever he went.

He would have his little jokes at her Baptist doctrine, but she knew he only did it to tease her. He served his mother the same way. He would say to her after hearing one of Mr. Elliott's sermons :

"I tell you, mother, our preacher gave us a fine sermon to-day. You ought to have heard it."

She would, in her most dignified manner, reply :

"My son, I enjoy the services in my own church more than I possibly could in any other."

Again he would say to her :

"We are to have baptizing at our church to-night. Won't you go down with us?"

All of these remarks Eloise took in the same spirit in which she felt he meant them.

Dr. Gray contributed very liberally to all the enterprises of the church, and had never, by word or deed, sought to hinder her in her work. She knew, whenever she saw in her visits to the poor that there was lack of medical attention, she could offer his services freely. He never denied her, but seemed to do it cheerfully. All of these little attentions she had taken as favorable signs that his mind was turning in the right direction. As she walked she pondered on the best way to meet this difficulty. Must she keep silent or speak? Which would be the better way? She decided to take no notice of it for the present, but to bide her time and pray to her Father to put just the right words into her mouth.

She dropped in to see one or two of the sick ones she was in the habit of visiting.

She went on home and wrote to her father about Aleck, and to Jennie Marvin.

When her husband came to dinner he found her so bright and cheerful that he flattered himself she had not heard. Since she left him that morning his thoughts had not been idle. He almost hated himself for offending her by the use of such polluting language. She, so refined, so gentle, so very lovable in every way, to be obliged to listen to it! He felt like calling himself a brute. He made a firm mental resolve, relying solely on his own strong will power, to break himself of this obnoxious habit. It had never appeared in that light to him before.

She was busy arranging for the coming guests, and he unusually so with his increasing practice, so they did not have time to see as much of each other as they wished.

Sometimes when he would come in so tired at night, with no assurance that he would not have several calls before morning, he would exclaim to his wife, "Oh, for one quiet week at Sunnymeade!"

She and Alice were very congenial. Alice was never happier than when she was with her, and would often go with her to church and to prayer meeting. Mrs. Gray did not at all like it, and protested against it, without positively forbidding it. She saw much to admire in her daughter-in-law, and would often say that the only thing she could find fault with her for was that she was incorrigible as a Baptist.

Once more she made an effort to win back her son to his first allegiance. She appealed to him to join the confirmation class and be ready for confirmation when the Bishop came; but he protested against church membership without a change of heart. She began to feel she had a hopeless task before her. Then it was that she would blame Eloise with what she termed her stubbornness.

Thus was Eloise worried from time to time by these accusations; but she kept on the even tenor of her way, with her face ever set towards the path of duty.

She was surprised one day when her husband said to her:

"I've been greatly troubled about something, and I must unburden my heart to you. I want to know if you heard any part of the conversation between Wright and myself the morning you came to the office."

"Yes, I heard more of it than I wished."

"I've waited for you to mention it to me, as I expected a lecture on the subject."

"Am I given to lecturing? I do not think you have had to play the part of Mr. Caudle to such an extent as to be in dread of it."

"Well, to be candid, I know I deserved it, and was in the condition of the boy who has been promised a whipping and wants it soon over."

"Since candor is the order of the day, I'll say I've been greatly pleased and agreeably disappointed at not hearing it before."

"What made you expect to hear it? That is strange."

"Because I was told you did it before we were married, and have had many prepared speeches made for the first occasion. As it was, I had waited so long, I was dumbfounded and couldn't say one word."

She thought there might never be a more propitious time to unburden herself on this subject, so she quietly and carefully detailed to him all the circumstances of her finding it out. She told of her sleepless nights; of what a burden she carried. She told how she and Mammy wrestled over it, and how Mammy got the better of her.

She went over her conversation with Jennie, and the conclusion they reached that perhaps God was allowing her to do this in order that he might be saved.

He seemed to be deeply moved by this recital.

"I admit I have for years been a slave to the horrible habit, as I see it now. But I made up my mind never to offend you by using an oath in your presence. I was so mortified the other day that I made a firm resolve never to do it again. However, a habit so firmly rooted as that one cannot be broken at once; unconsciously I've been guilty two or three times. I most solemnly promise you now that I will not be so indiscreet again."

"I take that as an answer to my earnest prayer, and feel sure that God, in his own good time, will answer fully."

Her heart throbbed with joy, for she believed that her prayers had been heard and would be fully answered.

Fred Young arrived on time, but only spent a day and night, so anxious was he to reach Belmont.

Dr. Gray laughingly said: "That is all right, Fred; we understand just how it is. It hasn't been so very long that we should forget it."

The days flew by swiftly. He and Jennie came just a few hours ahead of Mr. Malcom. Dr. and Mrs. Gray insisted that he should abide under their roof during his visit.

There were various pastimes and excursions, and

time flitted. Before they were aware of it, the time for separation came.

Mr. Malcom had avowed himself and been accepted as the suitor of Alice Gray. Mr. and Mrs. Gray assented, but stipulated that at least a year should pass before the consummation of their engagement. This seemed a long time to the ardent young lovers, but they agreed to wait.

Fred would come in two months more to bear away his bride to his northern home.

Dr. Gray could not forbear to tease her a little. He would say to her sometimes :

“I must rack my brain to prepare a tanning preparation for you. I’m thinking what a lovely object you’ll be when the Jersey ‘skeeters’ get through with you. I know they are banding together already to attack the Virginia blue blood, which they hear is coming into their midst.”

As usual, she was always ready with a reply. She staid several days with them. One day he said to her :

“Miss Jennie, I’ve but one wish to make for you and Fred, and that is that you may be just as happy as we have been.

We will soon pass our first mile-stone in married life, and I am sure no two have ever been happier. If all the others are to be of the same kind, we’ll be models for all who are to come after us.”

With the visits home, and her rounds of duty in the church, Mrs. Gray led quite a busy life.

Dr. Gray was trying to arrange to spend several days at Sunnymeade after the wedding at Belmont, in order to get the much-needed rest.

When Aleck Ferguson came, Eloise invited him to stay with them until he became somewhat acquainted with the city and his new surroundings. She felt so much depended on his first associates. He gladly accepted, and in every possible way tried to show his appreciation of the kindness. He was to be left in charge of the house. She had introduced him to the very best young men in the church, and thought his association with them would be very helpful to him.

His first month's salary, at her suggestion, was mostly spent for himself. There were many necessary things to be had, though Mrs. Ferguson had done the best she could to fit him up.

When his next month was due, he carried the money to her and said :

"I want to spend this for mother. Will you take it and buy just what you think she and the girls would like to have, with some little present for father and Jack."

"I certainly will. You mean something to wear?"

"Yes ; you know what will suit. Of course, we cannot have fine things like yours. Get things to fit our circumstances."

She felt proud to see him use his native good sense in spending his first earnings.

She told her husband of her entire day's shopping to

spend Aleck's money. She said she was sure the merchants had pronounced her a "bargain fiend," for never had she bought such a quantity of goods with so little money.

She was quite as proud as Aleck when she showed him her purchases, and he saw how much his own earnings had accomplished.

"Thanks to you," he said, "for I would never have gotten this place but for you and Dr. Gray."

She made it a point to go to him whenever she had anything in that line to buy. She had also introduced several of her friends to him.

His employers spoke highly of him, and said that "he was both apt and attentive."

Mrs. Gray went home a week before Jennie's marriage, to assist in the preparations. She was to also assist Mrs. Marvin in receiving the guests, while Aunt Lizzie would preside over the supper. It was to be an old-fashioned Virginia wedding, and guests were to come from several different States.

She carried Aleck's purchase to his mother the next morning. She and her father talked of the improved condition of the family. Mr. Ferguson had gone to work, Col. Carter said, and the entire place showed the improvement.

"Aleck has grit," he said, "and will some day make his mark. I first thought of offering to send him to school, but, seeing that he was inclined to push for himself, I concluded to let him try. I think it a better

plan to let boys seuffle sometimes. It makes men of them. I intend yet to aid him. Whenever you and Charlie see that he needs a helping hand, I am ready to assist. That is my idea of benefiting people—teaching them self-reliance and helping them to help themselves.”

“I fully agree with you,” Eloise answered. “I could easily give him his board, and I was afraid of outside influence over him. He could have the use of our library, and improve himself in that way. This package has already given unbounded pleasure to two—Aleck and myself. Now it is to make a whole household happy. The hats in that box there will seem treasures to them.”

Mrs. Ferguson and the girls met them at the gate.

“I am very glad to see you, Mrs. Gray. How did you leave Aleck?”

“Oh, he is well, and, I think, happy. He just seems fitted for the place,” Eloise said.

“He is so proud of it. He writes every time about how kind you and Dr. Gray are to him. I was so thankful to you for taking him to your house. Not many would have done that for poor folks like us. He says every time, ‘Ma, be particular with the girls. I hope to be able to help them later.’”

“He has begun already. Just open the box, children, and see your pretty hats, bought with Aleck’s own earnings. He was so proud of them.”

They were admired and tried on over and over

again. Every now and then a silent tear of thankfulness would steal its way down Mrs. Ferguson's cheek, as she looked over the things her own boy had sent her. Visions of brighter days were before her.

"I'll see you again before I go," Eloise said to Mrs. Ferguson. "I am glad to see you looking so well."

Everything was excitement throughout the entire neighborhood. It was not often that so grand a wedding took place in that section.

Between Sunnymede and Belmont there was constant communication. Miss Lizzie and her cook were just as busy as those at Belmont. Hampers of cooked articles were sent over. The guests were arriving, and Mrs. Marvin had all she could do to entertain them.

Miss Lizzie and Eloise went over the day before for the final preparations. There was not a single unpleasant occurrence. Truly all went "merry as a marriage bell."

When the last of the guests had departed it certainly had the appearance of a "banquet hall deserted."

Dr. Gray remained for a few days, and took a much-needed rest.

Mammy always found a convenient time and place to say a word to him about his soul. At first he always joked with her about it. Of late he was more serious, and seemed to listen more attentively to her.

Never did she go to her bed at night without asking God to save his soul. She would say to herself, "I could leave my chile better satisfied if he was a Christian."

Thus she prayed and expected.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION.

SUNNYMEADE, April 5, 1878.

“ My Dear Boy :

“ It is not often that a man has the proposition made to him that I am about to offer to you, and that is, I want to borrow your wife.

“ A sudden and burning desire has seized upon me to attend the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, to be held at Louisville, Ky. I am appointed as one of the delegates to represent Virginia, and I shrink from making the journey alone. I know of no companion who would be so agreeable to me as Eloise. I think the trip would be a source of great pleasure to her—not only to go with me, but she would doubtless meet many friends and acquaintances.

“ There is yet another reason why I wish to go. I’ve been in correspondence with one of the Kentucky stock-raisers in regard to the purchase of some horses and mules. I would much prefer to make my own selection from the number he has for sale.

“ I would not propose the trip to her first. If for any reason it would not suit for her to go, I did not want her to have any regret in the matter.

“ We may be absent three weeks. If there is any

special place she would like to visit, I will take great pleasure in going with her.

"Please let me know at once if my startling proposition meets with your approval, so that I may notify the committee at Richmond of my acceptance.

"Love to the dear child.

"Very truly yours,

JNO. E. CARTER."

"So, so," he said to himself. "I couldn't say nay, if I wanted to. But I will have a little fun out of it."

Going to his desk he dashed off the following letters:

"APRIL 5, 1878.

"*Dear Father:*

"Yours just received, and will reply at once without consulting Eloise. I am sure I could not deny either of you the pleasure. I know she'll be only too glad to go with you. However, I must do something to compensate me for my loss. I am going to show her a copy of the enclosed letter as my reply to you. I'll have the fun of teasing her a little. She takes everything I tell her as a *bona fide* fact.

"She'll no doubt write you by the next mail. I can assure you that the home will be desolate without her. There is much sickness and I am kept busy.

"Affectionately,

"CHARLIE."

He went home to his dinner a little earlier than

usual. He found his wife entertaining visitors. They left in a few moments, and she ran in to see if it would be necessary to hurry the meal.

"Are you in a hurry? If so, I'll have dinner at once."

"No need to hurry. I have had such a startling proposition made to me that I had to come home to consult with you about it."

"What can it be?"

"A man wrote to me to borrow my wife. If that is not startling, what is it?"

"Of course it is. But you know it is some poor crazy creature. No sane man would do such a thing," Mrs. Gray said.

"You are mistaken there. It is a veritable proposition from as sane a man as I ever knew," answered the Doctor, gravely.

"You ever knew? Do let me see it. Do I know him?" she asked in rapid succession.

He handed her the letter.

"Oh, Charlie! It is from father. Is he sick? Why does he need me?"

With trembling fingers she opened the letter, and as she read it a change came over her face.

"Certainly I'll go. There is not one thing to prevent. Ellen wants a holiday, and you can take your meals at father Gray's. That is a capital arrangement. I'll write as soon as dinner is over."

"No need of that. I answered it at once, and brought along a copy for your approval."

He passed it to her, and tried to look as unconcerned as possible.

"Dear Father :

"I am in receipt of your favor of April 5. I am sorry to disappoint you, but circumstances over which I have no control will prevent Mrs. Gray from leaving the city at this time—some of which I'll name: Old Sister Henry is down with the 'wuss spell of rheumatiz she's had for nigh on to ten years'; while Dolly Jones' lame back 'don't git no better at all,' notwithstanding the fact that I've prescribed various plasters, lotions, ointments, etc. Tim Brooks will be sure to get drunk and beat his wife, and there will be no ear into which to pour her troubles. Catherine Flynn's three brats have measles. Besides, there are numerous renegades who prefer fishing to Sunday-school. I feel sure Mrs. Gray will prefer to remain at her post of duty rather than to see all the blue-grass farms and high-stepping horses in Kentucky.

"Very truly,

"CHAS. B. GRAY."

Her face was a study. She looked at her husband, but for the moment could not trust herself to speak. He looked as solemn as a judge. There was no suspicion of a smile.

"Oh, Charlie! How could you!"

The blue eyes overflowed, and a sob finished the sentence.

He had not expected her to take it so seriously, and felt sorry he had done it. He caught her in his arms, and tried to make her see it was a joke. In that short time there were many conflicting emotions in her heart.

"I am afraid you are not well, Eloise, or you would not get nervous this way. Now get quiet and let me explain."

He told her of the letter he had really written, and how glad he was for her to have the pleasure.

"I am so much ashamed of crying, but you didn't smile at all, and I thought you were making fun of me. If you were to do that, it would break my heart."

"Get your hat and go with me for a drive. I've a visit to make about two miles out. We can talk it over as we go."

"And you'll leave me at mother's, and I'll see if she will take in such a bad fellow as you are. I'll leave my Farm Ballads with Alice and get her to read 'Gone With a Handsomer Man' daily to you, to pay you for your bad treatment," Mrs. Gray said.

When they met at supper, every vestige of the trouble had passed.

She was elated at the prospect before her. She could talk of nothing else. There would come times when she would think of the loneliness of Dr. Gray. And who was to see after her boys? These had become almost as dear to her as those at Berea. Indeed, her solicitude was greater for them, because of the greater temptations by which they were beset.

The rest of the time was spent in preparation for her trip, and the setting in order of her house.

She had written to Aunt Lizzie to know if she and Mammy could come up to see her before she left. "If not," she wrote, "I must come, if I can only spend one day. I could not go without seeing you, especially as Mammy is constantly growing more feeble."

It was arranged that they would come, and both felt that it was better thus, as Aunt Lizzie could see that all of her arrangements for the trip were complete.

While making her preparations for this excursion, her thoughts often reverted to Jennie in her far-away home. She felt that her time was pretty much occupied in her new sphere.

Her father came the day before the time for them to leave, in order to make his final arrangements.

At the tea-table that night Colonel Carter said :

"I've one of your Aunt Lizzie's premonitions, Eloise."

"Not that the cars will run off the track and break our necks, I hope," she replied.

"Oh, no ! It is a pleasant one. I do not think I ever started out on a journey feeling so sure of a good time. I am so glad Brother Gordon could go. It was wise for him to start early and rest himself on the way."

They were both pleased with their trip on the railroad. They did not intend to come back by the same route, so took in the magnificence of the scenery as they went.

Her father had engaged their rooms at the hotel some time before, so they had no trouble in that.

They went often to the meetings and met many old acquaintances. They heard, of course, much fine preaching and many able debates.

They saw much of the beautiful city and its environments. The day before the adjournment they left to spend a few days with an old friend of Colonel Carter's whom he had not met since they parted at Appomattox Courthouse, more than twenty years before. He saw his name on the hotel register and called on him. He insisted that he must not leave the State without a visit to him at his home on the Ohio, about fifty miles below Louisville. They spent two days most pleasantly, and their host insisted that they prolong their stay; but Colonel Carter said he felt obliged to turn his face homeward.

Eloise wondered the more that he should take the steamer on Saturday and go to a strange place to spend the Sabbath, when they had been urged to remain with their friends.

"I can give no urgent reason for going, only I feel impelled to go in that direction," he said.

They took the steamer at 9 o'clock, and did not arrive at their destination till eight in the evening.

They retired early, and arose much refreshed, to spend a quiet Sabbath. They found that the town only contained about two thousand inhabitants.

After breakfast Colonel Carter interviewed the landlord as to the churches and hours of service.

"We are quite a religious people, sir, if the number of churches is any indication. We have a Methodist, Presbyterian, Campbellite and Baptist Church."

"Where shall I go to hear the best sermon, do you think?"

"I cannot speak much from experience, sir," said the landlord. "I don't often go myself. I guess you can hear a pretty fair one at any of them. By the way, there's to be a big time at the Baptist Church to-day. They've been without a preacher for a time, and a new one has come. I think, from what I've heard my folks say, he is a man who is getting on in years, and has begun to preach lately. They are going to have some sort of extra doings over him. May-be that would suit you."

"How far is it?"

"Just go to that corner, yonder, and then straight ahead about five squares; a white church on the left."

He went for Eloise and told her of his conversation with the landlord. "He thinks there will be a crowd; so we'll go on, in order to get seats," he said.

Even at that early hour they could only get seats near the door. Everybody seemed filled with excitement.

Pretty soon four ministers entered the pulpit and took their seats. Colonel Carter adjusted his glasses and took a good look at them. He turned to Eloise and said:

"There is something strangely familiar in the face of the brother on the right."

Just then the eldest of the four arose and gave out a hymn. Then one of the others led in prayer.

The third one arose and said :

"Brethren, in the examination given Brother Jones by the brethren appointed, one among other questions asked him was, what first led him to think of preaching the gospel. He gave us such an interesting account of the events which led him to it that we thought it wise to let him make the same statement to you that he did to us. It will be helpful to many of you. It is certainly an example of Christian living worthy of emulation. It teaches us to sow at all seasons, relying on God for the harvest. It will consume but a short time, as he will only state facts, without going into details."

As he arose, Eloise saw her father start. She wondered who the man could be, or if her father had ever known him. He turned to her and whispered :

"I do believe that is Robert Jones. You were too small to remember him."

He came forward and said :

"It is not of the time which I've lived among you that I'll speak so particularly this morning—of that most of you know. I was early left an orphan in my Virginia home, and thrown on my own resources for a living. I was employed on the farm of one of the best men I ever knew. He helped me in many ways. At

a very early age he made me manager on his home place, that he could give me the advantage of his experience, and thus enable me sooner to command better wages. He gave me a room in his own house, and I ate at the table with his family, which you know was not always the case with the rich.

"His wife was one of the godliest women I ever knew. She often talked to me about my soul. I always listened respectfully. I honored her as a Christian; but still I went on without heeding her many admonitions.

"She was taken sick, and, though the doctor was there daily, no danger was thought of. But one morning he came, and pretty soon he ordered his horse to be put in the stable. Then came a message to me to send quickly for their pastor. The news flew like wildfire. The poor negroes seemed heartbroken. I found they could not work. I ordered the teams to be put up, and we all went to the house.

"She was past human aid, the physician said. She had everything to live for, as far as this world goes. There was one little fair-haired, blue-eyed girl, that was almost worshipped by all on the farm. She just as calmly gave directions for bringing up that child as if she was going off on a visit of a few days, and would see if those directions were carried out."

Eloise laid her hand in her father's in sympathy. She saw that he was greatly excited.

"A message was brought to me to come, as she

wanted to say good-bye. How I wished I knew how to pray ! I felt so unworthy of such kindness as she had always given me. How I wanted to beseech God to spare her !

"I went in and she reached out her hand. I saw the damp of death on her brow. She said, 'I want you to promise to meet me in heaven,' and with her feeble voice she urged me to prepare for the same solemn hour. I promised ; but, like many others, I put off from time to time seeking God's forgiveness.

"The war came on soon. I, like thousands of others all over this Southland, hastened to offer myself to fight her battles.

"Of that time it is needless to speak. Its close found me in Rock Island prison. From its walls I came out without a cent. There were no loved ones waiting to welcome me, and I was not able to trudge to Virginia.

"Providence led me in this direction. I felt, after crossing the Ohio, that I would take the very first work I found and settle down.

"From that death-bed there had never passed a day, scarcely an hour, without thought of the promise made. Not until that bleak winter of 1864 and 1865 did I fully put my trust in God. I often wished I could tell her, yet I could not help feeling that she knew. I thought so much of her beautiful Christian living and the good she did while I was shut up in prison.

"There came over me the thought that I ought to

tell the story to my dying fellow-men. I reasoned that I was incapacitated for the work by lack of education.

"My life among you is known. I've had much to encourage and much to hinder. I've tried often to rid myself of the thought that God really meant that I should preach. I've never hesitated to speak a word for him whenever an opportunity offered, and all the time I've done what I could for my intellectual advancement. When you unanimously called me to be your pastor, I could hold out no longer. From henceforth 'I desire not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.'

"One word more to you Christian women. You do not know the influence you can exert, not only in your own home, but outside of it, by a godly life. When the first girl came to our home, I claimed the privilege of giving her a name. My wife acquiesced. I said, 'Then it shall be Kate Virginia Carter Jones. If she grows up to be like the woman for whom she is named—Mrs. Kate Carter, of Virginia—she will never do anything to bring reproach on the fair escutcheon of my native State, nor dishonor the name of the godly woman for whom she is called.'"

Colonel Carter and Mrs. Gray had attracted considerable notice from those around them. It was evident they were strangers to all present. Those nearest them had seen that Colonel Carter seemed greatly agitated, and felt some anxiety to know the cause.

Just as Mr. Jones was about to take his seat, the

stranger arose and quietly made his way to the front. He was a man who would attract attention in any company. He was tall and erect, and he still showed his military training in his carriage. Of course all eyes were turned upon him. As Mr. Jones saw him coming he did not at first recognize a single feature; as he drew nearer, and reached out his hand to him, like the rushing of mighty waters it came to him. Not only Colonel Carter, but Sunnymeade as it appeared to him that May-day, 1861, when he left it, stood out before him.

The two stalwart men embraced each other and sobbed as children.

The entire congregation responded in sympathy, and wept without knowing why.

Mr. Jones said :

“Excuse us, brethren, but this is my benefactor, Colonel John Carter, of Virginia, who by chance is with us to-day.”

“No, Robert, not by chance. Truly God’s own hand led me hither to-day. I was attending the convention in Louisville, and at its close went down the river to visit an old friend, who brought every persuasive argument to bear that he could, in order to induce me to spend this day with him. Somehow I felt impelled to come on here, as I had some business nearby to transact. I am truly glad to meet you again, and under such favorable circumstances.”

The two men, with tear-stained cheeks, stood with

clasped hands while the congregation rose spontaneously and sang :

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform ;
He plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.”

This episode, though not a part of the programme, was the most enjoyed.

A sister, in describing the scene to another, said :

“I didn’t know there was so much music in that old hymn ; for when they came to that second verse—

‘Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take ;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
With blessing on your head,’

I thought they would fairly lift the roof.”

Colonel Carter said in a low tone :

“I have Eloise with me, and I’ll go back to her, as she is alone. I’ll remain after the service to speak to you.”

The service was completed, and before the benediction was pronounced Mr. Jones said :

“I would be glad to have as many of you as wish come forward and shake hands with my friends ; for Colonel Carter has the little blue-eyed girl with him.”

He went down to their seat and, grasping Eloise’s hand, said :

“Can it be possible ? I can hardly believe my own

eyes. Yet there are those same blue eyes—so like your mother's. I hope you are like her in all things."

"She is very much like her mother in many respects, Robert. She was all in all to us. But we had to allow her to be stolen from us. She is now Mrs. Dr. Gray. I borrowed her for this trip."

"I want you both to understand that you are exclusively my property while on Kentucky soil, so we will have time to talk it all over. Come down to the front. I want you to meet some of my people."

They went down, and as soon as the great congregation was dismissed large numbers lingered to shake hands with the strangers. Notwithstanding the fact that they had been kept long beyond the usual hour of dismissal, they seemed loath to leave.

Mrs. Jones only staid long enough to be introduced to them and hastened on home. She so well knew it would be her husband's wish to have them at his home that she went on to have everything in readiness for them.

When they arrived, and the children came up to speak to them, Colonel Carter was much pleased at their appearance. There were only three of them—Robert, Jr., twelve; Kate Carter, ten, and Roy, seven.

"Robert, I greatly appreciate your remembrance of my wife, and if I live I'll educate your girl. I hope, as you said in naming her, she will do credit to both Virginia and my wife."

There were so many questions to be asked and

answered that it seemed the time would not suffice for them.

Colonel Carter told him of the business which caused him to stop here. He found that his correspondent was well known to his friend. They arranged to drive out to his farm the next morning and look at the stock for sale. He felt perfectly secure now, as Mr. Jones very highly recommended him as perfectly reliable in every particular.

Eloise wrote her husband that she couldn't say when father would be able to tear himself away. She then gave an account of their Sunday and how they were "lionized," she said.

The purchase of mules and horses was made. There was in the lot a lovely iron-gray filly which Mrs. Gray admired extravagantly. "Oh, father! did you ever see such a beautifully-shaped head as she has, and such symmetry of limbs."

This led the owner to tell of her wonderful pedigree. "We are as proud almost to trace back for the fine blood of our horses as you Virginians are to go back for your own blue blood, Mrs. Gray."

"I'll take her, Mr. Hunter," said Colonel Carter.

Turning to Eloise, he said:

"I must compensate Charlie for his loss in some way. I bought her for him. Do you think he'll admire her as extravagantly as you do? I know he has been lonesome, and *we've* had such a good time."

"If possible he admires a fine horse more than I do. He'll be fairly wild when he sees her."

Their visit was drawing to a close, though it had been extended two days.

Mr. Jones said, the last night of their stay :

"Colonel, the sight of you has made me yearn to see the old place again as I've never done in all these years. I think I'll have to accept your invitation to visit Virginia."

"I shall expect you and your family, in the near future, to come to see us. Lizzie will be so delighted to see you. She enjoys getting up good dishes for her friends as much as ever."

It was arranged before parting that Mr. Jones and family would spend the month of October with their Virginia friends.

They took the steamer Thursday morning and came on home without any further delay. They enjoyed the new mountain scenery of this route extremely. It was a constantly changing panorama.

Dr. Gray was awaiting them on their arrival home, and expressed his pleasure at the healthy appearance of the pair.

"Your very warm reception by your friends seems to have accomplished wonders for you, Colonel. I haven't seen you looking so well for a long time."

"I do feel quite rejuvenated. I enjoyed every moment of time, but none so much as the visit to Robert Jones. That was perfectly delightful to me. I

return your property none the worse for her jaunt, I hope," said the Colonel. "I'll pay the interest on the loan later."

"She is a beauty, too. The only trouble will be, I am afraid you will lavish more of your affections on her than on me," said Eloise.

"What do you mean? I never was good at solving enigmas."

"Wait and see for yourself. I'll have to tell, so I had just as well out with it. Father bought you the loveliest iron-gray filly your eyes ever rested upon. I'll tell you about her good blood when you've seen her."

"I suppose he remembered my weakness for fine horse flesh," rejoined Dr. Gray.

"I guess so."

By agreement the stock was to arrive the same day that they did. Colonel Carter wished to see them taken safely from the train.

He had written for a couple of the farm hands to come the day following to take them home.

He and Dr. Gray were on hand to see them taken from the cars. They seemed a little cramped, but otherwise were in good condition.

When the iron-gray was brought out, Dr. Gray's admiration knew no bounds.

"Eloise was right about her being a beauty. Her good blood speaks for itself. No pedigree needed for her. I certainly appreciate your kindness, Colonel. You keep us under renewed obligations all the time.

I fear I can never even begin to repay them in the least measure."

"Yes, there is but one thing I ask—that you make the dear child happy. Let nothing which you could prevent mar her happiness, and I am content."

When they were quietly at home that night Eloise asked many questions about her poor friends that she left in his care. He told her something about each, and then he said :

"I turned over the Sunday-school notes to Aleck to look after. I went to church two of the Sundays you were away. The third one I was too busy to go. I only got to prayer-meeting once."

How her heart leaped for joy ! She felt that meant something—for him to go to church and prayer-meeting in her absence.

"Aleck said the class staid together pretty well. He will be home to-night. He is about as tired of wandering around as I am."

"I suppose you went with mother to church. I know she was delighted to have you by her side again."

"No, indeed ; I went up and took my accustomed seat just as if you had been at my side. I do think Mr. Elliott was a little surprised to see me," answered the Doctor.

"I am so glad that you went," responded his wife.

The Grays all came to sit till bed-time and hear about her visit.

Her father left early the next morning for home,

with the promise to send Aunt Lizzie and Mammy up in a few days.

"Poor Mammy! I'm always afraid each visit will be her last," said Eloise.

"Why don't you keep her with you all the time?" asked Alice, who heard the remark.

"I could not tie her here for good. There is nothing here to attract her but me. There is her own little cot, with its little garden attached; such a medley of flowers in it—four o'clocks, primroses, black-eyed susans, etc., interspersed with myrrh, thyme, mint and bergamot. I can smell them almost now. She couldn't transfer that. Then there is the graveyard on the hill, where sleep Uncle Tom and the four children who have been in heaven these many years. She would feel that she had committed the unpardonable sin to leave them.

I haven't heard the latest from Mr. Malcom, Alice. When do you expect him?"

"He will be here in a few days. He couldn't name the day when he wrote. One of the firm has to go to Europe. He rather expects it will fall to his lot. If so, he will come at once."

"And will you go, too? How grand for the little sister!"

"That is the arrangement now. If so, we will be married fully a month earlier than we thought. Mamma is quite upset by the prospect, as it will necessitate a very quiet affair. We will have to leave at

once. Jennie is coming very soon. She expects to spend the entire summer in Virginia. Several of the family will come during the summer."

"So she wrote me. I want to see her so much," responded Eloise.

CHAPTER XV.

A RESTFUL VISIT AT SUNNYMEADE.

EARLY one morning, a few days after the conversation between Alice and Eloise, Mrs. Gray put in an appearance at her son's home, before he left for his daily round of visits.

"Good morning, mother mine," said her son. "Why are you astir so early this morning? Not making hay while the sun shines, but doing your visiting before its heat is oppressive, eh?"

"I expect to be astir for the next month. Alice is expecting Mr. Malcom to-morrow, and he got the appointment for the European trip. They will sail July 15. Just to think, not more than a month to do so much in. I am sure I don't see how it is to be done."

"Being the most accommodating man in the State, I'll have to lend you my wife to help you out of your dilemma. She'll get you out of trouble, if anybody can."

"That is just my business here now. I came to ask you, Eloise, if you were not too busy, to give me your assistance till this thing is done with."

"Nothing will afford me more pleasure, I can assure you, and there is nothing to prevent my entire time being given to serve you."

"That relieves me greatly. I feel confident I can-

not rely on Alice for much assistance. She doesn't seem to realize her responsibility in the least. Only yesterday I needed to consult her, on what seemed to me a most important matter. When I found her she was perfectly absorbed in a book. The tears were running down her cheeks, and I felt alarmed lest she had heard some bad news. 'What is it, Alice?' I said. 'Do tell me! What book is that you are reading?' I asked, as I had not succeeded in getting an answer, and remembered how many tears she had shed over the troubles in books. 'It is Grace Truman,' she answered. 'Poor thing, how she was persecuted, and by her own father-in-law! I just couldn't help crying over her. She was so patient with it all.'"

Eloise had a hard time to keep her face straight. She felt as if she would fain have some excuse for a laugh. She dared not look at her husband, for fear of eternal disgrace in her mother-in-law's estimation.

Mrs. Gray was in such an excited state that she did not notice the expression on the face of either listener, and kept on with her story.

"After tea I was alone, and went to the library and picked up the wonderful book. I read it for some time before I discovered its character. And what, Charlie, do you suppose it was? Only a first-class Baptist novel. My child weeping over it! Do you wonder that I was provoked and indignant?" said Mrs. Gray.

Just at this juncture, before a reply could be ex-

pected, Ellen put her face in at the door to say, "A boy wants you, Miss Eloise."

"Excuse me a moment, mother," and she went to find the dirtiest little urchin she had seen for some time. So relieved was she to get out of the predicament a reply would have placed her in, that she felt she could hug him, black and grimy as he was.

It was the same tale of woe which she heard almost daily.

"Mrs. Gray, mother is sick, and we ain't got nothin' to eat."

She told Ellen to fill his basket with what cooked provisions were in the house.

"All right, Tommy; tell your mother Dr. Gray will see her to-day. I'll be there some time during the day myself."

She heard through the open door the rest of the conversation, as she saw Ellen pack the basket for Tommy.

"Ha! ha! That is rich, mother, for you to find *one* thing first-class about the Baptists. I thought *we* were below par with you."

"I must say you and Alice do me great credit. She reading and crying over one of their books, and you saying '*we* were below par.' There was one comfort, however, in it—it was the father-in-law instead of that much-abused personage, the mother-in-law, who was the persecutor!"

Eloise said, as she came in :

"Charlie, Mrs. Flynn is sick, and I sent her word you would call to-day. Do not forget it. I'll go myself later. Now, mother, just as soon as I change my dress I'm at your service. I'll be ready in a very short time."

"I am glad that Alice will have the pleasure of a trip to Europe," said Dr. Gray. "She has always wanted to go. I must fix up a little programme for them as to sight-seeing. I could see much more now and at less cost than I did when I first went over. My next excursion is to be there. I want Eloise to have that pleasure. It may be we can go next year."

Soon the two were off to do what is the delight of every woman's heart—buy a wedding outfit. A large part of hers was complete. It was the millinery, gloves, wraps and small articles that were to be had now. It was arranged that Alice would join them at the dressmaker's at eleven o'clock.

The days which followed were the busiest of busy days. Each night would find them too tired to do aught else.

It was a relief when the very last purchase was made and the trunk which was to go aboard the steamer was strapped.

The bridal presents came from all directions, and were handsome. Finally there was laid a small package with the others. On the card was "Best wishes—Dr. and Mrs. Charles B. Gray." Mrs. Gray picked it up and opened it, to see a handsome pocket-book,

beautifully mounted with silver, with Alice's name engraved on the plate. She felt disappointed, for she had expected them to do something very liberal. She called Alice's attention to it.

"Have you looked inside?"

"No, but it is light."

She opened it, to find a roll of new, crisp bank-notes, all in English money, with a little note, saying, "Pocket change for the little sister."

"I am so pleased at having a full purse of my own. It will make me feel quite independent. I can buy anything which pleases my fancy, without calling on anyone," Alice said.

She expressed herself to the donors as being very much gratified at their gift.

It seemed incredible how time flew, but these found quite true the old adage, "Time and tide wait for no man."

The ceremony over and the wedding breakfast served, and a few hours more find our young friends launched not only on the voyage of married life, but veritably on an outgoing steamer, crossing the Atlantic.

As we are to stay on this side, we will say "Good-bye and bon voyage" to them.

The reaction after the exciting events of the past month made Mrs. Gray, senior, dull and languid. She said she was unfit for any duty. At Eloise's invitation, she went with her to spend a few days at Sunnymede. Heretofore she had not felt that she would enjoy the

quiet of the place at all. She surprised herself at being so perfectly satisfied and feeling so content. She wrote to her husband to come with Charlie, and they would spend a week together in this "haven of rest," as he calls it.

There was a revival among the colored people in the neighborhood. They had nightly meetings at their church, and often they could hear them, as they would pass, shouting till they were perfectly hoarse.

It was proposed one morning that they all go that night to hear the sermon from the colored pastor.

"He is not at all educated," said Colonel Carter, "but is an excellent man. He has a high sense of right, and urges his people to obey the laws of God and man. He has the confidence and respect of all the whites in this section of country. No one would think of doubting a statement of his. He is a blacksmith, and does most of the work for the neighborhood. He makes very ludicrous blunders in the use of words sometimes."

There was quite a party when they started out, as they were joined by a number from Belmont. Several of the Young family were visiting there, and it was a novel thing to them.

They were all attentive and respectful.

"Uncle Ephraim," as the pastor was known to all in the neighborhood, did not seem to be at all disconcerted by the new element in his audience. He referred to them several times. He prayed thus for them :

“O Lord ! bless de white folks who is come to hear de gospel. Erluminate dar minds by de light held out by dis servant ter-night.”

The mourners were out in large numbers. The seekers, with long faces and bowed heads, were very quiet, while those who “came through” were extremely noisy. Sometimes it would take more than one brother to manage some sister.

Uncle Ephraim, seeing one fat sister who seemed unmanageable, said :

“Brer Smith, lend a han’ here to hold Sister John-sing.”

At the close of the meeting he announced :

“Dar’ll be no sermon ter-morrer night, but a sperience meetin’. All de new converts will talk. Ef we is ashured dat dey is found de Lord, dey will jine en be baptized at dar own convenience. Dar will be baptism Sunday mornin’ at sun-up, ’ca’s’e fo’teen adults en fifteen adulteresses has giv’ er sufficient sperience ter jine de church.”

It was well for our party that they sat so near the door and could get out quickly, for they were convulsed with laughter.

“What did he mean, Colonel ?” asked Mrs. Gray.

“Only that fourteen men and fifteen women stood approved for baptism,” answered Colonel Carter. He was lecturing his son once about using bad language. ‘Ain’t you got no respect fur dat mouf? I tell you, chile, I ain’t goin’ to sile mine so, case I eats wid dis

mouf, I dus,' which argument he thought sufficient to keep his mouth pure."

They decided to remain till Monday, and hear Dr. Gordon on Sunday. He had spent a day with them at Sunnymeade. Mr. Gray had only met him the day of the marriage. He was much pleased with him, and felt anxious to hear him preach. He had mixed with the world for so long, and, in the vortex of business, had not indulged in serious reflections about religion, as he felt now that he ought to do. Like many other men, he had delegated the religious training of his children altogether to his wife. He felt that his whole duty was done when he provided means for the maintenance of the family. He had seen lately his mistake, but realized it too late.

To Mr. Gray this was one of the most enjoyable Sundays he had spent in years. The quiet of the surroundings, the very air in its purity, all conspired to remind him of his youth.

Everything was plain; the music was not such as he listened to every Sunday, yet it was inspiring, and it was evidently worship. Memory was busy. He was back again in the old church. He fancied he saw his mother, with her gentle expression, sitting in her accustomed seat. On the opposite side, his father, drinking in the truths of the gospel. He could almost fancy he heard his hearty "Amen," as the minister would present some thought particularly comforting to him. There were the same sounds of the twitterings of the

birds, the rustle of the leaves on the trees, the neighborly whinny of the horses announcing a new arrival, that he had so often heard at his old church.

Only the announcement of the text, "Prepare to meet thy God," aroused him from his reverie.

It was an intensely solemn discourse. It seemed almost the parting injunction of one who was about to step out into that great beyond of which we all, more or less, have an innate dread.

Eloise offered a silent prayer that this might be the day that her husband would see himself a lost sinner and heed the advice given.

There was another heart in that assembly which beat in unison with hers on this point. Aunt Hannah had never moved her membership to the colored church, but always occupied a seat in the gallery. She, too, prayed earnestly for his conviction and conversion.

Mr. Gray and Colonel Carter rode together in a baggy, while his wife, with Miss Lizzie, Dr. and Mrs. Gray, went in a carriage.

Soon after leaving the church, Mr. Gray said :

"Colonel, I've not enjoyed a day at church as much for twenty or more years. I feel that my soul has been blessed. My people were all Methodists, and I found myself going over my early years in the old home church, before the sermon. Retrospection is a fine thing sometimes."

"Indeed, I am glad to hear you say you've enjoyed the day. I think the habit of looking back over the

past is one that grows on us as we grow older," rejoined the Colonel.

"The sermon was exceedingly solemn, and ought to make a lasting impression on his hearers. I am sure I'll not soon forget his wise admonitions," Mr. Gray replied.

"That sermon gave me the horrors," said Mrs. Gray, at the dinner table. "Why do preachers feel called upon to make life such a solemn thing? Why not give only the bright hue to everything? It is just as easy."

"But, my dear," answered her husband, "do the bright hues always last? Are we not daily reminded that they do not? I feel that the sermon has done me an infinite amount of good. It has awakened a train of thought that I am afraid has lain dormant too long in my mind. It is a preparation we should all make, for death is certainly a surety. I was telling Colonel Carter, as we came on, something of my early church life in the old Methodist church at my home. People of whom I had not thought for years came before me as distinctly as I ever saw them, especially one old woman who shouted very often. As a small boy, my heart would almost stand still when she began. She was one of God's elect. She went home to heaven—shouting still as her feet touched the cold stream—many years ago. Her influence is still felt in that church."

"Well, what next? I begin to fear that my whole

family will slip through my fingers. I never knew before what a fondness you have for the Methodists. I hope you'll not be a shouting one. It would make me so nervous. I dislike anything of that sort," his wife said.

Eloise somewhat regretted the conversation. She had hoped that an impression had been made. She felt that the Spirit's influence was at work in her husband's heart. If his mother had only left her words unsaid ! He loved his parents very dearly ; but of late he had expressed himself as wishing that his mother was not so much wedded to the things of the world.

The expressions from his father seemed to touch him.

They returned to the city early the next morning.

Eloise had another conversation with her father in regard to assisting Aleck. It was settled that he would give substantial aid whenever it was practicable to do so. He said : " I think we know the kind of stuff he is made of and can trust him."

Mrs. Ferguson sent up a basket of fruit to be carried to him. " Not," she said, " that he does not get much better in town, but this will remind him of home."

Eloise made it convenient to see all of her class during the week and let them know she was home again. All of the original class were not present. There had been many changes. Some had been promoted to a higher class ; one or two had left the city ;

one proved incorrigible, and, after repeated efforts on her part to induce him to come and take interest, she had for the time given him up—except to ask God's help to bring him back.

There came letters full of interest from Alice and her husband—sprightly descriptions of people and places. The business which called him there was speedily and successfully dispatched. Then they had ample time to see all of the principal cities before their return.

Alice was an enthusiastic traveler. She had read a great deal about Europe as a child, and knew just what she most desired to see. Sometimes, when arranging at what points they would stop, Mr. Malcom would suggest that they pass that by as of little interest. But she would give some valid reason, and the result would be that she carried her point. For instance, he said :

“We'll not make a stop at Bingen. There is nothing special there to attract us.”

“Not stop at Bingen? Oh, Robert! When the dream of my life has been to see Bingen. In imagination, I've seen the cot from which ‘A Soldier of the Legion’ so proudly marched away; the well-remembered walks he took ‘with another—not a sister.’ Then I've pictured her as, with tear-stained cheeks, she watched the remnant of ‘The Legion’ as they came back again, and sighed as she thought of the far-away grave in Algiers.”

Of course she saw the “vine-clad hills” of Bingen. Who could resist her appeals?

We naturally feel a deep anxiety when we know that our friends are crossing the ocean. The Grays felt a little restless until a letter from Alice came announcing their arrival. She said :

“Some of you must visit me, for Robert says I am not to leave him, and he’ll not be able to leave till Thanksgiving. I forgot to tell Eloise that Robert is very much exercised on the subject of baptism. We met, coming over, some very pleasant people, who were Baptists. There was considerable discussion on the subject, and since then he has thought a great deal about it. I told him to wait and let Eloise explain the matter to him ; that she could do it better than those did on the steamer—that is, she would make it plainer. For my part, I think I am altogether, and not almost, persuaded on the subject, and hope Robert will look at it in the same light as I do. As he is not a member of any church, we could go together. It is my wish to be useful, like Eloise.”

Her mother made no comments as she read the letter to her son and daughter.

After she left, Dr. Gray said to his wife :

“Alice is quite bold at long range. I don’t think she would have talked quite so plainly to the mother if she had been face to face. Distance makes lots of difference in what we say.”

“Perhaps it does. I know Alice had thought and read a good deal on the subject. I hope mother will not lay the blame at my door. Whenever she asked

me any questions on the subject, I would tell her to read prayerfully the New Testament, and let that be her only guide. I think the one who honestly does that will not make a mistake."

"I had almost forgotten to say that Aleck's employers think they have a very fine opening for him in New York. They have not yet mentioned it to him, as it would require some small outlay. But in the end it will, they think, prove very advantageous to him. They asked if I thought it would be possible for him to raise two or three hundred dollars. They say he certainly has talent, which he can never develop here as he could there. I told them I would speak with you about it. I thought you said it was your father's intention to give him some help when the proper time arrived," Dr. Gray said to his wife.

"He will certainly do it. It has been his wish for some time to do it. But he thought it better for Aleck to work his own way, and let people see what was in him. He has certainly reached that point now. I know father will gladly advance the necessary amount. It will not be urgent enough to write him, as he will be here in a few days?" Mrs. Gray asked.

"No, when he comes he can talk it over with them and satisfy himself as to the feasibility of the plan. I think that will be much better," replied Dr. Gray.

"Mr. Elliott called to-day. He was telling me of his plan for the protracted meeting. He has engaged a minister to assist him, and will continue the meeting

through the month of October, if the interest justifies it. He seemed very sanguine on the subject. He seems to feel that there is already a deep feeling on this subject pervading the entire church. He says he feels as the farmer does when he sees his field of grain just ready for the reapers' blade. I do trust that he is not mistaken. Though, like him, I feel that the church is ready to receive a great blessing."

"That is just the month for your friend, Mr. Jones and his family to come. You'll be over-taxed, I am afraid, with the company at home and going to church too," said her husband.

"They will be glad of the privilege of hearing the distinguished preacher. Father and Aunt Lizzie will like to be here all the time Mr. Jones is here. We had better arrange for the first part of the visit to be at Sunnymeade. I know of a most excellent servant I can engage for that month to help Ellen, and I need have no extra trouble."

"Do that, by all means. I would get her at once, and let her get used to her position, so she will know exactly what will be expected of her," he said.

"I'll do it to-morrow, if she can come so early."

The second day after this conversation her father came. Before she had mentioned her plan to him or had told him of Aleck Ferguson's prospects, he said to her :

"I had a letter from Robert Jones yesterday. They have been obliged to change their arrangements some-

what, and will come between the fifteenth and twentieth of September."

"Oh, I am so glad of that! for now I can be with them at Sunnymeade."

"I thought it was settled when we parted in Kentucky that you would be there with them."

She then told him of the meeting and how she had planned for them all to enjoy it together.

"Now we can all be here and you will have had your visit, too," her father said.

"I am troubled about Charlie, father; yet I cannot help feeling that he is almost persuaded. I may have been wrong in my way of dealing with him. I've not worried him nor urged him. I soon found out that would not do him any good. I think his mother, in her extreme anxiety to get him in the church, made matters worse by constantly urging him. While I may seem to others unconcerned, I daily, yea, almost hourly, importune God to save him."

"Well, daughter, the truths of God's word are yea and amen. We are his children, and must await his own good time for him to verify those promises to us. I know that more than two or three are agreed touching this thing, and, better than that, I believe he is honestly thinking over the matter himself. Men of his character are the hardest to move; but when once converted, they make the kind of Christians to be depended on under all circumstances. I have in mind now Mr. Johnson, who was baptized when your mother

was. In fact he was the first person Brother Gordon ever baptized. He was quite fifty at the time, if not older. He was like a beacon light in that community. He had the most radiant countenance after that. He was never known to murmur. Come what would, he was happy and contented."

"I am glad you feel so hopeful. I believe myself that whenever he is converted he will make a useful Christian," was her reply.

She then told him of the offer to be made to Aleck, and what amount would be needed, and suggested that he see the firm and be fully satisfied about it before it was mentioned to him.

This was done, and as it seemed to be just the thing suited to him, Colonel Carter gave his check for the required sum, which was to be a loan, without bond or security. Nor was he to pay interest on the loan.

Aleck was delighted at the prospect, and he was just as appreciative as he could be.

He was thinking deeply on that most important subject—his soul's salvation. He felt so unworthy of all of God's goodness to him. He thought over the last three or four years of his life—how God had led him on step by step, raising up friends to assist him whenever he had needed them. He could but ask himself the question, "What have I done for him?"

CHAPTER XVI.

HENCEFORTH WE WILL WALK TOGETHER ON OUR
WAY TO THE BETTER LAND.

SEPTEMBER opened so oppressively hot that the visitors at Belmont decided not to return to New Jersey, but to spend the rest of the month in the mountains, all except Jennie. She and her husband proposed to stay at her mother's. He said he greatly preferred the quiet of the country to the gayety of the most fashionable resort. He had been with them only a few days during their stay, preferring to take his vacation at this time.

Eloise and Jennie were delighted at this arrangement, as it enabled them to see much more of each other.

Mr. Jones wrote to Eloise that he would go by way of Washington and Norfolk, and would expect to meet her at Sunnymeade September twentieth.

She had arranged all of her household plans, so that it would only be necessary for her to return a couple of days in advance of her guests.

There seemed to be a revival feeling pervading the entire church. Not only were the pastor and deacons actively engaged, but a large majority of the church was astir.

Mr. Elliott said to his brethren and sisters in prayer-meeting :

"I have felt that we are to have a great meeting ; but to-night I am assured of it. I have never known the church to be in such a prayerful, expectant attitude as it is at this time. I went to see Sister Saunders to-day. I had not been in her room but a few moments before she said : ' Brother Elliott, I am not able to sleep well at night, and I spend my time praying for a great outpouring of the Spirit on our church, and I believe it will come.' Ah ! I thought, when one who has suffered as she has for months, and can so far forget self as to spend her time in her hours of wakefulness beseeching God's blessing on us, it must come. She named several who are objects of special solicitude."

At the morning service the next Sunday, when the invitation was given to those who wished to ask an interest in the prayers of God's people, or to unite with the church, there were several to accept the invitation. Among the number was Aleck Ferguson. He presented himself for membership.

Eloise's heart bounded for joy. She had so much wished to see him take this step, and, now that he was to be thrown with strangers in a large city, she would feel so much better satisfied when she knew him to be a Christian.

At every service there were like assurances of the deep religious feeling which was pervading the church. The visiting minister would find them ready for the harvest.

It so often happens that the faithful pastor sows the

seed through the years, and they are tended and watered by the prayers and tears of some of the humblest of God's children, and when the ripened sheaves are just ready to be garnered, an evangelist will come along, and he is credited with the labor and results.

To Mr. Jones this reunion at Sunnymeade was one of the most delightful episodes in his life. Of course, there were not so many faces that he remembered, but there were some familiar ones. One of the first places to which he carried his wife and children was the little graveyard on the hill. They had heard so much of the one whose grave was their special object of interest, that they, too, almost imagined they could see the funeral procession as it wended its way to the grave.

Kate Carter read and reread the inscription on the shaft :

In Memory of
CATHERINE ELOISE CARTER,
Aged 24 yrs., 6 mos.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them."

"Papa," she said, "that is the truth, isn't it?"

"What, daughter?" her father asked.

"Her works do follow her. You say she induced you to be a Christian, and you are trying to get everybody else to be Christians. I never knew what it meant before—for your works to follow you. I thought they went to heaven with you."

"I want you to remember, Kate, that our bad deeds follow us, just as surely as the good ones do. Our reaping will always be of the same kind as our sowing, only we will reap much more than we sow. Look over there at that nicely prepared field. Suppose Colonel Carter would expect to reap only one bushel of wheat for each bushel he sowed, do you think he would have gone to the trouble and expense to put his land in such excellent condition?"

"I don't expect he would," she replied.

"No, indeed. As it is, he expects it to yield many fold more than his sowing. So with our deeds, be they good or bad," solemnly Mr. Jones said.

Colonel Carter had arranged with Dr. Gordon for Mr. Jones to preach for them the following Sunday. There was an immense crowd out, and he preached an excellent sermon. It was plain and practical; there was no attempt at oratory or display; it was a heart-searching discourse. An unusual number of colored people occupied seats in the gallery. Most of them were the older ones of the neighborhood, who remembered him. Numbers of them came up and spoke to him after the services were over.

The children particularly enjoyed rambling over the farm with their father and listening to his stories of the things which happened here "before the war." It seemed to them it must have been so long ago. To their father it appeared as but yesterday since he went over it all, so very natural did everything appear to him.

Eloise went home with the promise of having them with her in two days.

The meeting was to begin the next Sunday.

She found everything in excellent trim, and she had but little to do except to open and air her rooms and put on the fresh linens for the arrival of her guests. This done, she looked after her sick friends, and anxiously awaited their coming.

They made the most of their time. Mrs. Jones and the children were so pleased with Virginia and everybody they had seen.

"I have always heard of Virginia hospitality," she said, "but with the Queen of Sheba I must exclaim, 'The half has not been told.'"

Dr. Gray was always an admirable host, but he seemed to vie with his wife to make these visitors have a good time. All of his spare time he gave to their entertainment.

The church was crowded from the very first service. Its utmost capacity was taxed, and every available space occupied.

On Sunday afternoon there was to be a meeting especially for men. Mr. Elliott requested that only such brethren come as were willing to do personal work with the unconverted. "The remainder of you and the sisters," he said, "I want to stay at home and spend the hour in prayer for the Spirit's power to come upon us. O that we may have a blessing like unto the day of Pentecost!"

There was a crowd, but a most intense and solemn stillness pervaded it. The sermon was remarkable for its simplicity and power. Many had heard sermons from that same text, it may be, often before—"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest for your souls." At the close of the discourse the invitation, as usual, was extended to any who could put their trust in Jesus to come forward.

Among the first to rise and walk calmly forward was Dr. Gray, his countenance radiant, but over it was a look of serenity and peace which made him lovely to look upon. The inward struggles he had wrestled with, none but he and God knew. For months he had fought against what conscience plainly told him was a duty. He knew his wife was praying for him, as well as others, yet how stubbornly he held out! Now he surrendered wholly and was fully determined to follow Jesus, it mattered not where the path should lead.

One after another—husbands whose wives had prayed for years; wayward boys, who had brought many heart-aches to their parents; some fathers, in answer to children's prayers—all came.

It was a scene that would live forever with those who witnessed it. Strong men wept, but they were tears of rejoicing.

At the hour of the meeting Eloise excused herself to Mrs. Jones and retired to the privacy of her own room, and there, like Jacob of old, she wrestled and would not let go without the blessing she so much craved.

A holy peace stole into her soul, and she felt as if she would be obliged to shout aloud; and could she have seen what was transpiring in church at that very moment, no doubt she would have done so.

If the angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, can our imagination portray the scene when scores have at this hour done the same?

Mr. Elliott gave the invitation to unite with the church, but urged them to consider so important a step well. That many of those converted, of course, would join other denominations, he advised a careful consideration of the subject. Some he knew would join his church, hence he opened the doors, and again a number went forward.

Colonel Carter was somewhat surprised to see his son-in-law among the first to take his place.

They were all closely questioned as to their conversion. Each one was asked his reason for wishing to be baptized. Not one stated his convictions on the subject of baptism and church membership more clearly than Dr. Gray.

Colonel Carter felt as if he could not wait till the services were concluded to go home and break the news to Eloise. He remembered that it would be better to allow him to tell the story for himself.

They walked home together. Not finding his wife in the parlor, Dr. Carter went to their own room.

It was not necessary to speak. She saw the story in his face. He put his arms around her and said:

"Henceforth we will walk together on our way to the better land."

She broke forth into praise and thanksgiving to God for his great and unbounded goodness to her.

He told her of his joining the church, which added to her joy.

"I'll go and see mother, Eloise, and talk to her about this. She'll regret that I did not go with her ; further than that she'll rejoice with me."

She felt that he would prefer to make the visit alone, so she did not offer to accompany him.

She went to the parlor to be with aunt Lizzie and Mrs. Jones.

Her father met her in the hall and said :

"Well, my daughter, our prayers are answered, and we have more than we asked for. It is always so, if we will only wait patiently on the Lord."

The entire city was shaken from center to circumference as it had never been before by a religious meeting. The interest spread till other ministers were impelled to open their churches and have nightly services.

One of the first persons Eloise thought of was Aunt Hannah. She sat down at once and wrote her a letter, and sent it under cover to the overseer's wife, that she might read it to her. She was feeble, and felt as if she would prefer the quiet of her own cabin to the bustle of Eloise's house, when filled with company.

Mrs. Gray rejoiced with her son, as did his father. Of course, she preferred him to join her own church,

which was so natural, but was very reasonable on the subject—much more so than he anticipated.

His father told him he thought he had acted wisely. "I commend you for it," said he. "I know Eloise is so happy. She is a jewel, Charlie, and I appreciate the wholesome influence she has exerted over you."

A few days more and the party separated. Mr. Jones and his family, refreshed from their sojourn in Virginia, turned their faces homeward. As he was about to say good-bye to them he said :

"I have enjoyed every moment of my visit. There has not been a single unpleasant occurrence. On the other hand, so many things have happened to gladden our hearts that we have renewed cause for gratitude. Should we not meet again in this world, we shall meet in the blessed hereafter, where there will be no more farewells."

They felt the parting sorely.

The next letter from Alice told that she and her husband had united with the Baptist Church, and would be baptized during that week.

Mrs. Gray took it quite philosophically, saying she, at least, would be sure and steadfast, and could not be turned by every wind. She surprised all by going to see her son baptized.

There were more than a hundred additions to the church, and yet the good work was going on. There were new ones added at every service. Many backsliders were reclaimed.

Eloise was rejoiced by the conversion of two members of her class. She had, from time to time, tried to induce some of them to come back who had from various causes stopped. Some had returned, but there were two whom she considered almost hopeless. They would avoid her whenever they could. The mother of one of them had sent for her and implored her to try to get him back. She said :

“Mrs. Gray, my heart is breaking. I beg and plead with him to do better, but he will not listen. He was such a sweet little fellow, and I promised myself so much pleasure. It is bad company. I tried to keep him out of the street, but since my health is so poor I am not able to follow him up as I once did.”

She wept and refused to be comforted.

Eloise thought of many plans to try to influence him in the right direction. She consulted her husband and he promised to try to think of something to save him.

Not many days thereafter, as he was starting to visit a patient in the country, he saw on the outskirts of the city a group of boys sitting on the ground. He recognized Henry Tucker among the number, and, remembering his promise to Eloise, he called to him. He came up to him, looking right much disconcerted. He thought it was from the fact that he had suddenly called him. He said to him :

“Jump in, Henry, and take a ride with me. I am going out to Mr. Robertson’s, and it is a lonesome ride. He hesitated at first ; but seeming to reconsider, he got

in the buggy. He was always neatly dressed, even if there were some visible patches. His mother was a widow, with a very small income. Up to this time she had been able to add to it by her own industry. But her health having failed, she was not able to do it now.

Henry had formed these associations which she felt sure would lead to trouble, and she seemed powerless to help. She had only one other child; a girl of twelve, who was a great comfort to her.

The Doctor did not ask him any questions at first, but told him several stories of himself when he was a boy. He saw that he was interested, and finally came to the subject of his own school life. He admitted he did not study very well.

"I am sorry for that," he said. "It may be that you will have to be Adele's support. Your mother does not improve of late. She seems to have something on her mind or heart which is preventing her improvement. I've tried to find out what it is. To me she is very reticent."

He glanced at the boy to see if his words had any effect. The color had almost forsaken his cheeks.

"Ma ain't going to die, is she, Doctor? Please don't say that. It would kill me," he said.

"Your mother is not incurable, Henry. But she is in that state of health that worry and trouble might kill her. She has certainly not gained any in the last two months. I would not like to be responsible for

any sudden shock in her present low condition. I am anxious for her to live to raise you both. But Adele needs her especially now," was Dr. Gray's reply.

He seemed almost choked by this news and couldn't reply.

Dr. Gray thought perhaps he had struck the right chord. Most boys love their mothers dearly, and the idea of their dying is agony to them.

They had reached the house and he went in, leaving Henry with the horse.

When he came out he saw that he had been weeping. He said to him as he got in the buggy :

" Doctor, if I tell you something, will you promise not to tell anybody ?"

" Certainly, if it is not morally wrong to keep it."

" I mean, you will not tell I told you ?"

" That need not be told."

They drove on to the next neighbor's to see a sick child.

He told the Doctor that those boys were planning to do something wrong and wanted him to join them. He told them he could not, but they said they would make him. " They didn't tell me what it was, but they said I was slim and could get in the place easier than any of the others. They said they would divide with me, and I need not take any of the responsibility. I go with those boys, but I ain't ever stole, Doctor. I can't go back ; if I do, they'll just keep coming after me like they do every night, and that will make ma

sick. I can stay in the woods, and you send ma word I am safe."

"If you are in the woods, I will not. If you prefer to stay, I'll see that you are well cared for, and will tell your mother I left you there. I will have to come out again to-morrow, and you can go back with me then. As this is Friday, you can stay—that is, if you promise me faithfully to remain where I leave you."

It was so settled.

They came back by Mr. Johnson's, and Dr. Gray went into the house and arranged for Henry to remain there till he came out the next day. He gave no special reason, except that he had taken a fancy to stay.

He drove past Mrs. Tucker's house. He called Adele to him and told her to tell her mother that he had taken Henry with him to the country and would bring him back the next day, and that he would come around after supper and tell her about it.

"Be sure, Adele, to tell her not to worry about him, as he is perfectly safe. I'll explain all when I see her, which will be soon."

He thought it best to wait till after dark before going, as he might probably find out something more about the trouble, and thus prevent it.

After supper he and his wife went to see Mrs. Tucker. They found her, as Dr. Gray expected, in an extremely nervous condition. He felt now that he had the key to her whole trouble, and was very hopeful of speedy relief.

He candidly told her of the events of the evening and that it was his opinion it was the turning point in Henry's life. He advised her to bear up bravely and do what she could to assist, promising to stand by them and do all he could to save Henry.

She gave way to a fit of weeping, and said :

"Oh, Doctor ! I am perfectly willing to die, if that will save him."

"I want you, now, to be willing to live to save him. That is what he needs. I think you will be all right by morning. I brought this sleeping powder for you, and you must rest."

Just then there was a shrill whistle outside. Mrs. Tucker started up in the greatest excitement.

"There they are now," she said.

"Do not let it worry you. I'll send them away as we go out, and put a policeman on their track," Dr. Gray said, as he arose to leave.

When they opened the door to go out they saw two or three boys disappear around the corner. They walked rapidly, hoping to overtake them, but could see nothing of them. They met the policeman on the next square, and Dr. Gray told him of the boys, and asked him to have an eye on them.

"I certainly will, Doctor, for they are a bad lot. I've run 'em off from Mrs. Tucker's gate several times. I guess they are after that boy of hers now. They try to get him out just to fret her, I believe. She has let them know she dislikes for them to come after him,

and they get him out just to let her know they can do it. We've watched 'em, but have never caught them doing anything that we could take them for."

"I am glad to know it is no worse. I was afraid they were up to some wickedness to-night."

Dr. Gray carried his wife home and went to see two or three patients, before retiring for the night. While the policeman's words had in a measure quieted his fears, he could but feel some uneasiness about it. However, as he saw or heard nothing more about them while making his visits, he retired feeling more comfortable.

In the meantime the policeman kept a sharp lookout for them, not forgetting to tell the man who relieved him to watch for them.

Young as these boys were, they had been too wary for the two men, who thought that they had arranged to entrap them.

They had secreted themselves in a dark alley to see who it was who came out of Mrs. Tucker's door. From their hiding place they watched the doctor and policeman during their conversation, and decided they were the subject of it. When they had seen them separate, the policeman going towards Mrs. Tucker's, one of them said to Bill Fisher, their acknowledged leader :

"Say, Bill, Physic's set the cop on us ; but we won't take his medicine. Ain't got so much confidence as Sister Tucker. Don't know whether she sent for

him to give her something to steady her nerves or strengthen the mind of that milk-sop of hers. Guess he give 'em both some soothing syrup and put 'em to bed. We'd better get away from these parts."

"That's so," said Bill. "But that milk-sop, as you call him, is thinner and better fitted to crawl through that hole than you or any of the rest of us. That is all I wanted him for. And he would be afraid to tell on us; he'd die first."

They decided to go to a vacant lot, near the factory they wanted to enter, and settle the matter.

"Pity the Doctor couldn't stick to his pills, and not meddle with our plans," said Tom Cofer.

"One less to divide with," said Bill. "I don't expect that old Jew will pay us enough to set us up in the banking business. I wish it was over and we had the money safe in our pockets."

"He promises well. When I asked him about waiting till next week to get the things he said 'No, no; I ships 'em to-morrow—eferyt'ing in dish house. I keeps dese t'ings joost too long already. I joomps efery time I sees a bluecoat. I puts dem, too; den dey searches; dey finds not'ing. I gifs you goot pay."

"His ideas of good pay and ours may differ somewhat," said Tom.

The night was getting dark, and they saw no cause to delay. They separated, each going in a different direction, to meet at the factory which they had planned to rob. It was to be renovated from garret to cellar in

order to put in new and modern machinery. The plumbers had been there and detached all of the brass and lead works and left them to be carried away at one time. The boys saw them and planned to get them. Each one had at different times gone in and seen where they were piled near a door. Then they told the old Jew junk dealer about them and he promised to buy them. He had arranged to receive them that night.

They saw that there was a broken pane of glass large enough to admit a thin figure. So Henry was selected, and it was this plan they were unfolding to him when the Doctor came upon them and carried him away. Of course they thought he came home with him.

It had been agreed that Tom Cofer, being smaller than any of the present party, should get through the hole and remove a bar which fastened the back door, that no lock might be broken. While they could not explain, they knew that the law was different when a lock was broken. One was to stand out and give a signal if he saw a policeman approaching while the others were effecting an entrance.

Everything seemed propitious. There was no moonlight, and the gas lamp was some distance away. Tom mounted the shoulders of the tallest boy and pulled himself on the window ledge. He tried several times to get in, and finally was pulling himself well into the aperture, when the alarm signal was given. With the swiftness of the wind the last one of them

flew and left poor Tom securely fastened. Neither out nor in could he get.

Realizing that he would be caught anyway, he screamed lustily for help. The policeman located the sound, but could do nothing to release him without help. He blew his whistle and soon had assistance.

In the mean time Tom got into a very honest frame of mind, and told the whole plot. They released him from his uncomfortable position and locked him up, and went in search of the others. By the time for the police court to open all were captured and brought before the justice for trial. When questioned as to whether they had gotten all of them, Bill, who was known to be the leader, acted as spokesman for the party.

"All but one," he said. "Henry Tucker ain't here."

The others looked surprised ; but thought at least it would be a fine joke on Dr. Gray and Henry to have him arrested after all.

A policeman was sent for him, but returned with the information that he was out of the city.

"Is there any proof of that?" said the justice. "At least, we'll have to know at what hour and by what train he left."

Just then Dr. Gray entered the court-room. Going up to the justice, he said :

"I have heard that you sent for Henry Tucker to appear here at this hour ; but that, sir, is impossible.

He is now out of the city ; but he will return to-day."

"When did he leave the city, Doctor? Do you know?"

"He went out with me yesterday afternoon, and spent the night with the Johnson boys, out on the pike. I promised to bring him back when I go out to see Mrs. Johnson to-day. I came, at his mother's request, to tell you this."

"That is all right, Doctor; thank you. I am glad of it, for these boys reported that he was with them in an attempted robbery last night."

Henry was anxiously waiting for the Doctor. He had not slept well, and consequently had thought much. He had promised himself and God never, never, to associate with those boys again.

As soon as the Doctor finished his visit they started home. When he told Henry of his visit to the police court, and of what he saw and heard there, it almost caused his heart to cease to beat.

"Oh, Doctor! and they would have had me in jail, and mother and Adele would have been disgraced. Just suppose I had gone home! I'll never go with them any more, I don't care if they beat me to death."

"That is the only way not to get in trouble—to keep away from the temptation. I am sure if you do not give your mother more trouble she will get well now," said Dr. Gray.

It did, indeed, prove the turning point in his life. He felt, whenever he thought of it, that he had been on

the very edge of a high precipice and just did escape falling over. But no one, after that time, had occasion to call him a "milk-sop."

The other boys, along with the old Jew, received their just punishment. It was proven that he had been not only receiving the stolen property brought to him, but had incited numbers of boys to steal.

CHAPTER XVII.

MAMMY GOES HOME.

As Colonel Carter had predicted, Dr. Gray developed into a warm-hearted, stalwart Christian. He loved God's house, and as often as circumstances would allow, he was in his place. It must be a most urgent case to keep him away from the Lord's Supper. He had made a deep study of these two church ordinances, which are so closely allied, and which he felt no Christian had a right to neglect.

To him they were peculiarly solemn. He regarded them equally binding. Even before he was converted, he never left the church during the celebration of either ordinance. His wife noticed it, but was very much surprised when he said :

"Eloise, I am greatly surprised to see members of the church, even some deacons, leave church before the ordinance of baptism is administered. To me that seems rather disrespectful. If they truly believe what they profess—that the Lord gave these two, and only these two, to the church—I do not see how they can turn their backs on either. I see, every time I am there at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, numbers of the members leave church before it is administered. If it means to them what they profess it does, I think

they are wrong. Even if they are not on good terms with some one, I do not consider that a sufficient excuse. As I read the story of the first supper, it seems plain that the Lord did not intend his followers to eat this bread and drink this wine to show their good-fellowship one for another. The reason given is plain—‘to show forth the Lord’s death till he comes.’”

This was some months before his conversion, and to his wife it was a revelation. She knew that he always waited respectfully through the administration of both ordinances, but she thought it only out of respect to her feelings. She never remembered in all her life leaving the church at either time. How thankful she felt for it now. Her reply to his remarks was :

“I agree with you fully in that, and you have the true Baptist idea. Contrary to what some people say of us, we know that neither are saving ordinances, but were given by our Lord to be observed by those who had repented and believed. Your observation on this subject only proves what I have often said, that ‘Christians are open books and are critically read by the world.’ How carefully we ought to live, not only for ourselves, but as beacon lights for others.”

Knowing his opinions on this subject, she was not at all surprised at his strict observance of them.

His greatest cross was public prayer ; but this he took up bravely. Without any show or ostentation, he carried his religion about with him in his practice. Never did he hesitate to speak a word for his Master.

He carried spiritual comfort into many homes, where he had only been able before to minister to the body.

The different ministers in the city heard many encouraging things about him in their visits to the sick of their flocks.

One old saint said to her pastor one day when he called :

“I tell you, brother, Dr. Gray is a first-class doctor, but he is a better Christian. He came in the other day and found me, like Martha of old, troubled about many things. I was so overburdened I couldn't help telling him about some things which were worrying me greatly. He said, ‘We will talk to the Lord about it.’ I tell you, my brother, from no one have I ever heard a prayer to beat that one. He did talk to the Lord. You would have thought that he was present in person, visible to the eye. I never before in my life felt that he was so near to me. I declare to you that prayer was worth more to me than the medicine he gave me ; for he followed it by aid and advice, which straightened out my affairs for me, and I feel that I will really and truly soon be on my feet again.”

There is no class of people who see so much of the real home life of the masses as physicians do. They see them at times and under such circumstances that there can be no sham. The stern realities are laid bare in their presence.

How necessary is it for them to be able to minister to the wants of the soul as well as those of the body !

Eloise is always on the lookout for something to do to benefit her boys. She wants them all won for Christ. Sometimes she feels discouraged when some sit Sunday after Sunday and no impression seems to be made. Then her thoughts go back to dear old Berea, and she names over the boys she left in her class when she was married, and how her heart swells with gratitude when she remembers what each one is doing in life.

Gordon Glenn has already offered himself to the Foreign Mission Board, and is fitting himself for his chosen life-work.

Frequent letters to herself or the Doctor tell how Aleck Ferguson, as a private member of a New York church, is endeavoring to do what he can for the salvation of lost souls. He is succeeding finely from a business point of view.

At Christmas he sent an exquisite piece of bric-a-brac, and on Eloise's birthday a beautiful painting. She appreciated them far above the money value, for she knew a heart full of love and gratitude prompted the gift.

He has bought the home for his mother, and Jack bids fair to be a first-rate farmer. Mr. Ferguson has really roused himself and gone to work. The fences and gates are his special pride. All of the slipshod look is gone from the entire place.

Mrs. Ferguson and the two girls, tastily and neatly dressed, feel quite proud the first Sunday they are driven up to Berea in their own new spring wagon. Its

seats are not cushioned, nor has it a canopy top, but it is their very own.

There is to be the regular Saturday church meeting, and Dr. Gordon urges every one to be present, as he has a special message to deliver to them at that time.

There was much speculation as to what it was to be. An unusual number were present.

After the regular routine business was gone through with, he asked that the senior deacon take the chair as moderator, as he wished to make a statement to them.

"My dear brethren and sisters, the time has come when in God's providence I feel it my duty to resign as your pastor. My failing health and advancing years have for months admonished me to take this step; but my affection for you and my love for the cause have induced me to delay this till now. It has given me the greatest sorrow of my life. I sometimes, in the dead hour of the night, feel that my very heart-strings are being wrenched away. I have known no other pastorate. Your fathers and mothers, and in many instances your grandparents, bore with all of my shortcomings in my earlier years, and, oh, how tender you have been with me in these later years! Can you wonder that the very thought of separation brings anguish? However, I'll not leave the church. My home is here. I'll spend my last days among you. I only ask in parting that when the end comes, with the same tender hands that you have ministered to me in life, you will bear my body to the back of the pulpit and there lay it

away till the resurrection morn, when I know I shall come forth to meet those I have so fondly loved here."

Overcome by his feelings, he took a seat.

There was not a dry eye in all that crowd, but convulsive sobbing and weeping. It had come upon them suddenly. It seemed as if they were bereft of speech."

At last one of the brethren rose, and, as soon as he could compose himself, thus addressed them :

"Brethren and sisters, I know that you are as much surprised at this as I am, and that you have not yet sufficiently recovered from the shock to think just how to act in this matter. I speak for myself, and I am sure I'll voice the sentiment of this entire church, when I say that Berea Church will not accept that resignation. Brother Gordon feelingly alluded to our fathers and mothers sleeping in their graves. I tell you, my brethren, if we did this thing, if such a thing were possible, I believe they would come forth from those very graves to reproach us. He has served this church almost a half century. He has been faithful to the trust. Then shall we, when old age and declining health have come to him, lay him aside as we would a cast-off garment. No, brethren, most emphatically I say, no."

Two brethren rose simultaneously. The moderator recognized Colonel Carter, who said :

"Brethren, I most heartily endorse every utterance of Brother Norris. Yet I must say I do it with shame. Yes, I say with shame—that none of us have seen this,

and provided against such an emergency. Long ago we should have gotten an assistant to Brother Gordon, a young man, to do the most of the work, and let him preach as he was able. The trouble has been, I think, that his sermons have shown so much vigorous thought that we did not see that the body failed. I am sure that there is but one sentiment in this church on the subject. I therefore offer this resolution: That the resignation of Dr. Gordon as pastor of Berea Baptist Church will not be accepted; but that a committee be appointed to select a suitable person as his assistant as soon as possible."

It met with many hearty seconds.

"All in favor of Colonel Carter's motion, manifest it by rising."

As one, the entire church arose.

After they were seated, the aged minister arose, and, with streaming eyes, he surveyed the body.

"Oh! my people! My people!"

He could say nothing more, nor was it necessary.

When Mr. and Mrs. Malcom went home from their visit to Virginia, they insisted that the family should gather at their Northern home in August.

A letter telling that Mr. Malcom's aunt had during her lifetime given him his inheritance, a handsome villa on the Hudson, also said that no family arrangements must be made for that time, as they would all be expected to spend it in their new home with them.

"It is large enough for all," Alice wrote.

The Sunnymeade household are all as well as usual, except Mammy. She rarely gets beyond her own door now. Occasionally on fine days she hobbles to the house. She is only waiting, she says, for the Lord to call her home.

"I must see my chile agin, Miss Lizzie. Write en tell her Mammy's mighty anxious ter see her. Sometimes I 'fraid I won't, case I feels so weak."

The boy had gone for the mail, and Colonel Carter and Miss Lizzie were anxiously awaiting his return. It had been longer than usual since they heard from Eloise. When he came and Colonel Carter saw that the letter was from Dr. Gray, and none from Eloise, he tore it open nervously, while Miss Lizzie looked over his shoulder and read :

"A son and heir arrived at our house this morning. Both are doing finely. He answers to the name of John Carter Gray, and sends his love to you, Aunt Lizzie and Mammy. We will expect you and Aunt Lizzie to-morrow. Hastily, CHARLIE."

Miss Lizzie carried the letter to read it to Mammy. She was much excited over the news.

"How I does wish I was able to go ! Is it a sin ter pray ter stay ter see it, Miss Lizzie ?" she asked.

"I think not. I know Eloise would be glad if you were able to go with us. I'll stay several days. I shall feel better satisfied to stay. I hope you will get better while I am gone."

"I don't spect it. I'm erbout seventy-six now. I'm livin' on borrowed time now, en may spect ter go any time, Miss Lizzie."

Of course there was great rejoicing in both the Gray and Carter families over this first grandchild.

"It is just the image of Charlie," said grandma Gray, while Aunt Lizzie saw several features "so much like Eloise."

He grew and thrived so fast that Aunt Lizzie felt like she must get home.

"Charlie, bring Eloise and Carter just as soon as possible. I know Hannah is counting the days. She is so anxious to see them," she said when she bade him good-bye.

"I will," he said.

How many times she had to tell Mammy about him and how cute he looked. Then she would say :

"I'm still prayin'."

When he was just a month old, Colonel Carter wrote to the Doctor to bring them just as soon as he could, as Hannah was failing fast.

It was decided to go, and when they got to the house they were distressed to know that Miss Lizzie had feared she would not know them.

"I'll go first, Eloise, and give her something stimulating, and when she revives I'll come for you."

She raised her eyes to him in the most beseeching manner as he went in. Almost inarticulately she asked

"Did you fetch him?"

"Yes. Now you swallow this and rest a moment, and I will bring him."

She closed her eyes and seemed to doze.

He went back for the mother and babe. He carried it up to her and laid it gently beside her. She put out her hand and Eloise clasped it, while the tears flowed down her cheeks.

"Don't cry, baby ; Mammy's goin' home. Don't cry !"

She held the babe so she could see it. A smile played over her face, as she said :

"I'll tell Miss Kate erbout de baby, 'bout—" It seemed as if she would not be able to finish the sentence. The Doctor moistened her parched lips. She added, "'bout Doctor—love—Jesus."

The eyes closed, one long-drawn breath, and the Lord's chariot, which she long and patiently waited for, came and took her home.

The next afternoon they bore her body to the grave, and beneath the pine they laid her beside Uncle Tom.

"I couldn't wish her back, for she is so happy. I so often wish I could see some saint enter through the pearly gates and meet the loved ones gone before. I, of course, cannot remember my mother's features ; but I've always fancied I'll know her when I get to heaven. I believe she knew Mammy, yet she had greatly changed since she saw her last," said Eloise.

They all went back, much to the Colonel's and Miss Lizzie's sorrow. They felt that the wee stranger

belonged to them, and insisted that they remain at least a week longer. For once Dr. Gray was inexorable and carried his point.

"Never mind, father," said Eloise, "you and Aunt Lizzie can amuse yourselves sufficiently with the young man this summer. We will all be together during August. Alice insists that she will not excuse you two. She is making very extensive arrangements for her house party. Mother Gray expects to go up and carry her cook two weeks before the rest of us are expected."

"With the 'sisters, the cousins and the aunts,' I guess I'll have very little nursing to do. It is fortunate for me that Carter is the first grandchild on either side. He will be such a prodigy that I will have nothing to do save to stand quietly by and see him well taken care of."

"Mother laughingly says by our house is the nearest route everywhere for father Gray now. He makes it a point to stop whenever he passes to see how Carter is, and shows evident disappointment if he finds him asleep. I am afraid I'll find myself getting just a wee bit jealous of the attention paid the youngster. All these years I've been the apple of your eyes, and do not think I could bear to be cast aside for even so wonderful a personage as this one promises to be."

"Remember," said her father, "that this is only another object of our love. As I told you when you were married, it is not to be compared with other objects in kind or intensity."

"I shall look for you both very soon," she said in parting. "Where you have an extra attraction, there should be extra visits."

"I'll be obliged to come pretty often to bring Lizzie. She will feel compelled to come, and then I can always frame an excuse for business when she doesn't feel obliged to go," her father said.

A few days after their return, when Dr. Gray came to his dinner, he said to his wife :

"Eloise, I want you to go with me to see a purchase I have made ; I want your opinion of it."

"What can it be? You did not tell me that you had any idea of a purchase."

"I want you to see it first."

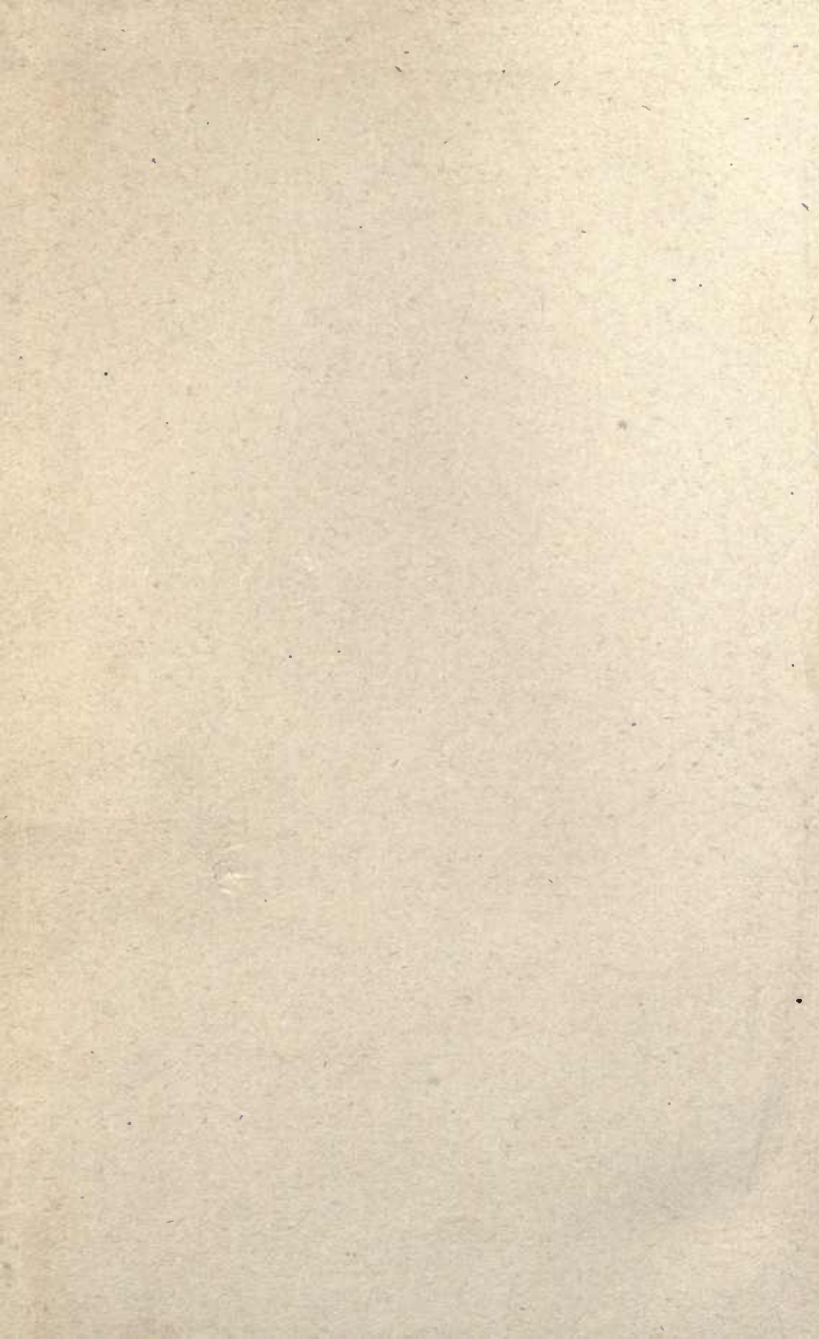
He drove to a marble yard. She couldn't imagine what purchase he could possibly make there. He carried her into the house and pointed out to her a slab, divided into two scrolls. On one was carved a scythe, on the other an open Bible. Over the scythe was "Uncle Tom" ; beneath it the one word, "Faithful." Over the Bible, "Mammy" ; beneath, "At Rest."

"Oh, Charlie, how much I appreciate this I cannot express. It is so simple, yet so expressive. Its very simplicity expresses more of their lives than could be in a volume of meaningless words."

"Poor Mammy ! How pleased she would be ! I almost think I can hear her say, ' And the Doctor ' remembered Tom, and never knowed him, neither.' "

THE END.





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